

A14 Huntingdon
Viaduct improvement
scheme, Monitoring of
associated Groundworks



Monitoring and Recording



May 2013

Client: Costain

OA East Report No: 1467

OASIS No: oxfordar3-149439

NGR: TL2295 7160

**A14 Huntingdon Viaduct improvement scheme, Monitoring of associated
Groundworks**

Monitoring and Recording

Site Code: HUNVIA13

CHER No. ECB3947

Date of Works: April 2013

Report No: 1467

Excavator: Jonathan House

Client: Costain

Report Date: May 2013

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Summary

OA East carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at multiple locations centred on (TL2295 7160) during April 2013. The monitoring was carried out during groundworks ahead of the A14 Huntingdon viaduct improvement.

Three locations were observed as part of the monitoring and recording, a new link road at the Brampton Road interchange, a sign post erection on St George Street, and an inspection of work close to the Milepost at the junction of Thrapston Road, Huntingdon Road, and Church Road, Grade II listing, entry number 1130186.

No archaeological features were present in any of the groundworks, demolition material was present within the small intervention for the sign post on George Street, the demolition material consisted of bricks of 17th to 18th century date, and are likely to be associated with former structures on the street frontage.

1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 Huntingdon is located in the Great Ouse Valley, which comprises of the Oxford Clay bedrock, overlain by river terrace and alluvium.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The following information is taken from the Specification (Spoerry 2012):
- 2.1.2 The proposed road development is located within the Great Ouse valley, an area rich in prehistoric remains notably from Bob's Wood (CHER 13033), which included several field systems and enclosures dating to the Iron Age.
- 2.1.3 Despite the proximity of Ermine Street within the modern town of Huntingdon, few remains of Roman date have yet been recorded in the vicinity of the site, although the discovery of a burial with associated finds at Nun's Bridge attests to some Roman activity in the area. Ermine Street was one of the country's major communication links, connecting London to Lincoln and York. Around Huntingdon itself, a scatter of evidence for archaeology of Roman date suggests that settlement here was moderately dense, perhaps representing outlier and/or ribbon development around the Roman town of Godmanchester and along the main road north.
- 2.1.4 Huntingdon was a very successful town during the two or three centuries following the Conquest, largely because of its status as Shire town. Its location, providing a bridged crossing on Ermine Street, which still formed the basis of the route later to become the Great North Road and A1, was also key to its success. By the early 14th century Huntingdon had sixteen churches, two priories, a friary and three hospitals; all the hallmarks of a thriving centre. "During this period, there probably would have been structures along the Walden Road, George Street, Market Place and Prince's Street frontages. Each structure would have sat in a long narrow burgage plot, separated from its neighbours by fences or possibly walls." (Kenney, 2003)
- 2.1.5 The location of St George's church is currently undefined, however its proposed location lies within the vicinity of George Street. Excavations at Walden House in 2005 did not uncover any remains associated with the church building.
- 2.1.6 The proposed new link road lies well away from the suggested focus of the main Saxon settlement and outside the medieval town of Huntingdon. However the site lay close to a former Benedictine Nunnery which was dissolved in AD1536 and reconstructed as the Great House, (modern day Hinchingsbrooke House).
- 2.1.7 To the east is Bar Dyke, (SM 188), an English Civil war defence for the town of Huntingdon that may have origins as a medieval town fortification, in addition Hinchingsbrooke Artillery Fort (CHER MCB3261) is thought to have been located where the RECO site now stands, on Brampton Road. In the 19th century deep quarrying (for clay and gravel) had taken place within the area of the RECO yard, this area was subsequently backfilled in the later 19th/early 20th century. This quarrying is thought to have destroyed the last traces of the artillery fort.
- 2.1.8 In the 19th century a general expansion of the town included the construction of properties along Ermine Street and this was followed by construction of the railway, opened in 1850, that runs 300m east of the site, that precipitated further expansion, this time along Brampton Road.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The objective of the monitoring was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits and upstanding remains within locations affected by the development.
- 3.1.2 The Brief required that areas identified as archaeologically sensitive with below ground disturbance should be viewed under constant attendance of an experienced archaeologist.
- 3.1.3 Two areas were identified as having a potential impact on archaeological deposits, attendance for the works was arranged prior to the commencement of the groundworks.
- 3.1.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 3.1.5 The site conditions did not inhibit the archaeological monitoring.
- 3.1.6 The work was located by information provided by the client.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Groundworks

Interchange link at Brampton Road Interchange (Fig. 1)

- 4.1.1 The groundworks within this area consisted of a narrow deep trench, for the purpose of additional drainage, and an open area strip, for the construction of a new roadway.
- 4.1.2 The drainage ditch was excavated to a depth of 1.5m and 0.5m in width, the top soil measured 0.15m and the subsoil measured 0.78m, the remaining depth cut into the natural gravels (Sections 1 and 2. Fig. 1). The subsoil contained fragments of modern brick, as well as small amounts of black tarpaulin, and plastic items, although access was limited, preventing accurate locating of modern finds within the deposit these materials appeared to be mixed into the deposit, rather than stratified within the deposit.
- 4.1.3 The area strip for the road surface measured approximately, 20m in length and 6m in width, across the traffic island. The area strip was excavated to a depth of 0.5m to 0.6m and did not impact below the subsoil deposit across the area.
- 4.1.4 No archaeological features or deposits were present.

Signage on George Street

- 4.1.5 A post hole was hand excavated for the purposes of installing a new sign post.
- 4.1.6 The hole measured 0.4m square, to a depth of 1.5m, the hole was excavated within the pavement, the concrete tiles and underlying base material measured 0.62m, sealed beneath this material was a layer of demolition, a mixture of brick, tile and mortar fragments. The bricks were of 17th or 18th century date, the layer was observed to the base of the hole, without finding the full depth of the demolition material.

Milepost Brampton

- 4.1.7 A new sign post was installed in close proximity to the Milepost at the junction of Thrapston Road, Huntingdon Road, and Church Road, Grade II listing, entry number 1130186.
- 4.1.8 Observations and guidance was rendered to ensure the milepost remained unaffected by the necessary groundworks, and sign construction.

Finds

- 4.1.9 All modern finds were discarded. No other finds were present.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Monitoring

- 5.1.1 The work at the Brampton interchange showed the subsoil overlying the natural gravels to be a considerable depth. The presence of modern finds within the deposit suggests, the soils had been redeposited, or at least disturbed. The lack of evidence for a former buried topsoil or stratified layers within the deposit would suggest a widespread stripping of the previous soils, probably during the modern construction of the junction, the soils then being replaced to the required level. It is unclear to what extent the natural gravels may have been truncated during the process. No archaeological finds were recovered from the excavated soils, however if the soils had been removed and replaced, the provenance of the soil would be unknown, and therefore unrepresentative of a potential finds assemblage in the locality. Archaeological features may survive below the modern soils if little or no truncation had taken place on the natural gravels, although no features were encountered within the deeper drainage trench.
- 5.1.2 The demolition material encountered within the hole for the sign post, was likely to relate to structures on the former George Street frontage. No evidence was seen for *in situ* remains, however the demolition material is likely to cover archaeological deposits. The depth of the deposit may indicate a deep feature, rather than purely made ground.
- 5.1.3 No significant archaeological deposits were encountered during any of the groundworks monitored.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1.1 The author would like to thank Costain who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Aileen Connor.
- 6.1.2 The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec.

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Kenney, S. 2003 . *Town Centre Modernisation, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. OA East Report No. 212.

Spoerry, P. 2013. *Specification for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording A14 Huntingdon Viaduct*. Unpublished OA East Report.

APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	<input type="text" value="oxfordar3-149439"/>		
Project Name	<input type="text" value="A14 Huntingdon Viaduct improvement scheme Monitoring of associated Groundworks"/>		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	<input type="text" value="02-04-2013"/>	Finish	<input type="text" value="24-04-2013"/>
Previous Work (by OA East)	<input type="text" value="No"/>	Future Work	<input type="text" value="Unknown"/>

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	<input type="text" value="HUNVIA13"/>	Planning App. No.	<input type="text"/>
HER No.	<input type="text" value="ECB3947"/>	Related HER/OASIS No.	<input type="text"/>

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
<input type="text" value="Demolition Debris"/>	<input type="text" value="Post Medieval 1540 to 1901"/>	<input type="text" value="Brick"/>	<input type="text" value="Post Medieval 1540 to 1901"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>

Project Location

County	<input type="text" value="Cambridgeshire"/>	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	<input type="text" value="Huntingdonshire"/>	<input type="text" value="Brampton Road
Huntingdon
PE29 3BP"/>
Parish	<input type="text" value="Brampton and Huntingdon"/>	
HER	<input type="text" value="Cambridgeshire"/>	
Study Area	<input type="text" value="50m2"/>	National Grid Reference <input type="text" value="TL 2295 7160"/>

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Cambridgeshire County Council
Project Design Originator	Paul Spoerry
Project Manager	Aileen Connor
Supervisor	Jonathan House

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Cambridgeshire Council	Bar Hill	Cambridgeshire Council
HUNVIA13	HUNVIA13	HUNVIA13

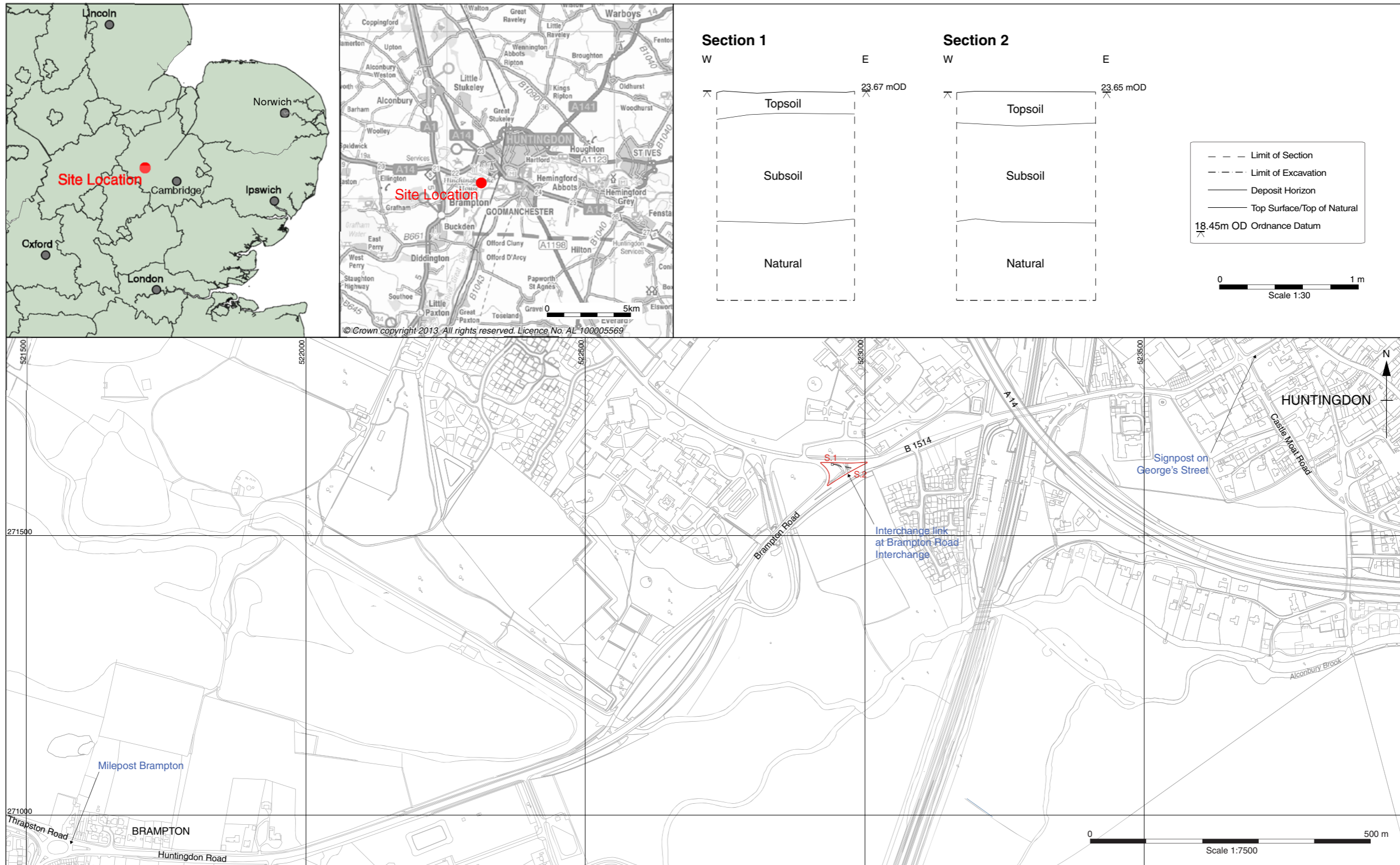
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Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:

Two locations were monitored as part of the project, Brampton road junction, and a sign post installation. Works at the Brampton road junction revealed no significant archaeological deposits. Archaeological deposits consistent with demolition materials were uncovered at sign post monitoring. There were no features or in situ remains uncovered during the works.



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Figure 1: Site location and associated sections



Plate 1: Drain trench at Brampton Road Interchange, taken from the west



Plate 2: Milepost at the junction of Thrapston Road, Huntingdon Road, and Church Road, taken from east



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