



Roman Remains on Land Adjacent to Itter Crescent, Peterborough

An Interim Statement



August 2011

Client: CgMs Consulting Ltd

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NGR: TF 182 018

Land Adjacent to Itter Crescent, Peterborough

Archaeological Evaluation

Interim Statement

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Summary

Between the 2nd and 4th August 2011 Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Itter Crescent, Peterborough.

The evaluation uncovered significant Roman remains consistent with a high status building/villa in the south eastern corner of the site. The area covered 100m east to west and 50m from north to south. The remains included stratified demolition and make up layers, foundation/robber trenches, internal and external surfaces and stone pathways.

Significant quantities of painted plaster, tesserae, tile and pottery were recovered from the demolition layers and surfaces of features. A Roman brooch, coin and copper ring were recovered from features and spoil heaps.

As the significance of the site was immediately apparent, in agreement with Peterborough City Council Archaeology Services, the evaluation was curtailed as further work was clearly required. This report is intended as a brief interim statement prior to a continued excavation programme. Finds from this phase of works will be incorporated into the post-excavation assessment.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at land off Itter Crescent, Peterborough between the 2nd and 4th August 2011. The development site is 1.4 ha in size and lies to the north of Soke Parkway in the residential area of Walton. To the east of the site is a recreational ground with the development area bounded to the west by housing adjacent to Fane Road. The site is currently disused but previously formed allotments.
- 1.1.2 Works were conducted in advance of a proposed housing development. The works were commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Bellway Homes East Midlands.
- 1.1.3 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Rebecca Casa-Hatton of Peterborough Archaeology Service, supplemented by a Specification prepared by Myk Flitcroft of CgMs Consulting.
- 1.1.4 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by Peterborough City Council, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.5 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The sites lies at approximately 11m OD with the underlying geology recorded as predominately Limestone of the Cornbrash Formation with River Terrace deposits on the far east of the site (BGS Sheet 158).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 A desk-based assessment was prepared by CgMs Consulting Ltd, using a search area of 1km radius from the centre of the site (Flitcroft 2011). The following information has been taken from that report.

Previous archaeological work

- 1.3.2 Peterborough City Historic Environment Record (HER) contains no records relating to archaeological sites or finds from the development area itself. The majority of the records in the HER relate to finds of artefacts made prior to the extensive development of the area in the 1960s and 1970s. These early finds include Roman pottery and coins found approximately 100m west of the study area.
- 1.3.3 The site of a medieval mill mound 950m east of the study site (HER 2256) was excavated in 1960, prior to the residential development of the area. Small scale trial works took place at Paston rectory in 1998 and 2004 (HER ref 50502, 51299); more extensive archaeological trial trenching and excavation took place in advance of development at Wesleyan Road, Dogsthorpe in 2007 and 2009 (HER 51461, 51921, 51933 – 800m southeast of the study site). Archaeological observation took place during construction of new bungalows at Crocus Grove Paston in 2004 (HER 51304 – 900m from the study site).

Early Prehistoric: Palaeolithic-Bronze Age

- 1.3.4 Peterborough HER includes 5 records relating to prehistoric finds within the search area, they include a Palaeolithic hand axe (HER 2211/50129), a Neolithic worked flint arrowhead (HER 2205), a Bronze Age arrowhead (HER 2218) and a small group of early prehistoric worked flints (HER 51932).

Iron Age

- 1.3.5 Iron Age findspots include an Iron Age coin (HER 2220) and a spearhead (HER 2206).
- 1.3.6 The excavation at Wesleyan Road, Dogsthorpe (HER 51461, 51933) 800m southeast of the study site revealed three phases of settlement spanning the Middle to Late Iron Age.

Roman

- 1.3.7 Roman findspots include two Roman coins (HER 50424, 52107) to the west or north-west of the study site. A single piece of Roman tile or *tessera* was found approximately 400m to the north of the study site (HER 50599). A small quantity of Roman pottery was recovered from medieval features during archaeological investigations at Paston Rectory (HER 50502).
- 1.3.8 A larger group of coins and Roman pottery is reported to have been found 100m west of the study site in 1912 (HER 2203).

Saxon and Medieval

- 1.3.9 Paston is thought to have developed as a village settlement in the Late Saxon period; 11th century carved stones (HER 2244b) are incorporated into the Medieval parish church (HER 2244). A small quantity of Late Saxon pottery has also been recovered during excavations at Paston Rectory (HER 50502).
- 1.3.10 The Peterborough HER includes four records relating to Medieval sites or structures within the search area around the study site. All Saints' church, Paston (HER 2244) was built mainly during the 13th to 15th Centuries; the HER also records a 15th century gravestone at the church (HER 2244a). Investigation at the old Rectory (HER 2247) revealed a fragment of a Medieval roof, possibly part of an aisled hall pre-dating the 16th century Rectory building. Outside the township of Paston, the HER identifies the site of a Medieval windmill mound (HER 2256) lying around 950m east of the study site. This was excavated in 1960 prior to housing development and was found to be the remains of a 13th and 14th century post-mill.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank CgMs Consulting for commissioning the project. Survey support was provided by Gareth Rees. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer. Rebecca Casa-Hatton of Peterborough Archaeology Services monitored the site. The site was excavated by the author, Nick Gilmour and Tom Lyons.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Machine excavation of nine 35m trenches was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.2 Following the identification of significant archaeological remains; a limited number of archaeological features were excavated in agreement with Rebecca Casa-Hatton of Peterborough Archaeology Services as further work was deemed necessary.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by Gareth Rees using Leica 1200 GPS.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector by Steve Critchley. All metal-detected and a sample of hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The archaeological evaluation revealed significant Roman remains consistent with a high status building/villa. Preliminary spot dating is suggestive of a mid 2nd to 3rd Century AD date. The remains were situated in the south-eastern corner of the site, encompassing Trenches 6, 7 and 8 as well as the southern end of Trench 9. Archaeological features include:
- foundation trenches,
 - interior and exterior surfaces,
 - stone pathways,
 - a pit,
 - boundary ditches,
 - possible terracing/building platform layer and
 - demolition layers
- 3.1.2 There is no evidence of either pre- nor post-Roman activity within the evaluation trenches.
- 3.1.3 The results are discussed by trench in number order. Trenches 1 to 5 were devoid of archaeology, a maximum depth of topsoil measuring 0.4m thick and a thin layer of subsoil measuring a maximum of 0.1m thick was observed in each.

3.2 Overburden and demolition depths

Trench	Topsoil (Max depth in m)	Roman demolition layer (max depth in m)	Approximate maximum total depth to <i>in-situ</i> deposits
6	0.3	0.25	0.55
7	0.35	0.35	0.7
8	0.4	0.1	0.5

9	0.3	-	0.3
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3.3 Trench 6 (Fig.1)

- 3.3.1 Trench 6 was located towards the southern boundary of the development area. The trench contains evidence for Roman buildings, surfaces, a path and demolition layers.
- 3.3.2 At the eastern end of the trench, feature 19 extended beyond the limits of excavation in an area of clear natural silts and gravels; the only location in this trench where the natural geology was observed. This feature was unexcavated.
- 3.3.3 The trench contains evidence of at least two buildings (41 and 44). The foundation trenches for building 41 surrounded a gravel (?internal) surface (43). The features were not excavated therefore depth and preservation of any lower courses of stones are unknown.
- 3.3.4 To the west of this building is a laid stone path (40) (?limestone not the natural cornbrash) which extended broadly north to south and can be assumed to be contemporary with the buildings.
- 3.3.5 In the western end of the trench was a further layer/feature (39) containing very large quantities of CBM (see Fig 3). The depth of this deposit is currently unknown however it may be a demolition layer directly associated with the two buildings present in this trench.
- 3.3.6 Directly below the topsoil and sealing the buildings, a Roman demolition layer measuring a maximum 0.25m thick was observed. This layer is a mid greyish brown, compact, slightly sandy clayey silt with frequent inclusions of gravel, CBM including tesserae, pottery and mortar.

3.4 Trench 7

- 3.4.1 Trench 7 was located to the north of Trench 6. This trench contained evidence of at least one building, a path, boundary ditch and demolition layers.
- 3.4.2 A 2m wide boundary ditch (33) appears to demarcate the western limit of the archaeology. It was not present in either Trenches 5 or 9.
- 3.4.3 The earliest archaeological deposits appear to be layers 31, 33 and 34. Layer 31 may comprise of both the upper Roman demolition layer and some of the underlying deposits. It was intended that two test pits were to be excavated in layer 31 - however feature edges were encountered on commencement of excavation (less than 0.1m into the deposit). To avoid confusing slots prior to stripping the site these test pits were left unexcavated.
- 3.4.4 Pathway (20) had a stone foundation with a gravel surface (Fig. 3, Plate 3) - this feature lay over unexcavated archaeological deposits visible to both the west and east. These underlying deposits showed evidence of possible heating *in situ*.
- 3.4.5 To the east of the path was a possible wall foundation which appeared to contain stone and gravel rubble. The deposits on either side of this feature (33 and 34) were different in character; layer 33 was more grey in colour whilst layer 34 showed greater evidence of having been heat affected. This may add further weight to the interpretation of a wall.
- 3.4.6 The Roman demolition layer sealed both the path (20) and possible wall (34). The layer was also very finds rich in this location with a maximum thickness of 0.35m.

3.5 Trench 8

- 3.5.1 Trench 8 was located along the eastern edge of the development area. It contained evidence of at least one building including masonry, a pit, boundary ditch, a possible terracing layer and demolition layer.
- 3.5.2 Possible boundary ditch 35 was observed at the southern end of the trench which measured over 2m in width. This feature was cut into the natural gravels along with feature 36 to the south.
- 3.5.3 The rest of the archaeological features observed within this trench appear to be cut into a terracing/building platform layer (8). This layer was a mid orange brown, sandy silty clay with occasional cornbrash stone and gravel and measured 0.38m thick in this location. The finds very occasional and consisted of Roman pottery and animal bone.
- 3.5.4 Deposits 11-16 comprise of significant quantities of building material, including small decorative mosaic *tesserae*. The upper deposit (11) is a mixed grey and yellow, clayey silt with frequent inclusions of mortar, pottery and CBM. This overlay a black burnt charcoal layer also containing frequent CBM. These layers may represent *in-situ* building collapse therefore preservation beneath these deposits has potential to be good.
- 3.5.5 Potential wall (10) lies only 0.3m below current ground surface. The limestone blocks appear to be faced but no mortar is currently visible (Fig.3, Plate 1).
- 3.5.6 The Roman demolition layer (15) was also present in this trench sealing the aforementioned archaeological deposits. It measures approximately 0.1m thick.

3.6 Trench 9

- 3.6.1 Trench 9 was predominately devoid of archaeology, however CBM and stone rubble were observed in the southern most trench section. The nature of this feature is not understood however it does provide the northern most limit of the archaeology in this area.

3.7 Finds

- 3.7.1 Hand collected finds from deposit surfaces and spoil heaps revealed:
- painted plaster in red, green and blue (including one striped piece),
 - ceramic and stone *tesserae* of varying sizes,
 - roof and floor tile,
 - mid 2nd to 3rd century AD Roman pottery including samian, Nene Valley Colour Coat, grey wares,
 - animal bone (not collected),
 - a Roman coin,
 - a Roman brooch and
 - a copper alloy ring

3.8 Bibliography

British Geological Survey Sheet 158

Flitcroft, M. 2011 Archaeological Desk Based Assessment - Land off Itter Crescent, Peterborough CgMs unpub client report

APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-107385			
Project Name	Evaluation at land of Itter Crescent, Peterborough			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	02-08-2011	Finish	04-08-2011
Previous Work (by OA East)	No		Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	PET ITC 11	Planning App. No.	-
HER No.	To be assigned	Related HER/OASIS No.	-

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
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Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input checked="" 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 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
Villa	Roman 43 to 410	pottery	Roman 43 to 410
ditch	Roman 43 to 410	brooch	Roman 43 to 410
pit	Roman 43 to 410	coin	Roman 43 to 410
surface	Roman 43 to 410	CBM	Roman 43 to 410
	None	tesserae	Roman 43 to 410
	None		None

Project Location

County	Peterborough U.A.	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Peterborough U.A.	Land off Itter Crescent Peterborough PE4 6SW
Parish	Paston	
HER	Peterborough	
Study Area	0.4 ha	National Grid Reference TF 182 018

Project Originators

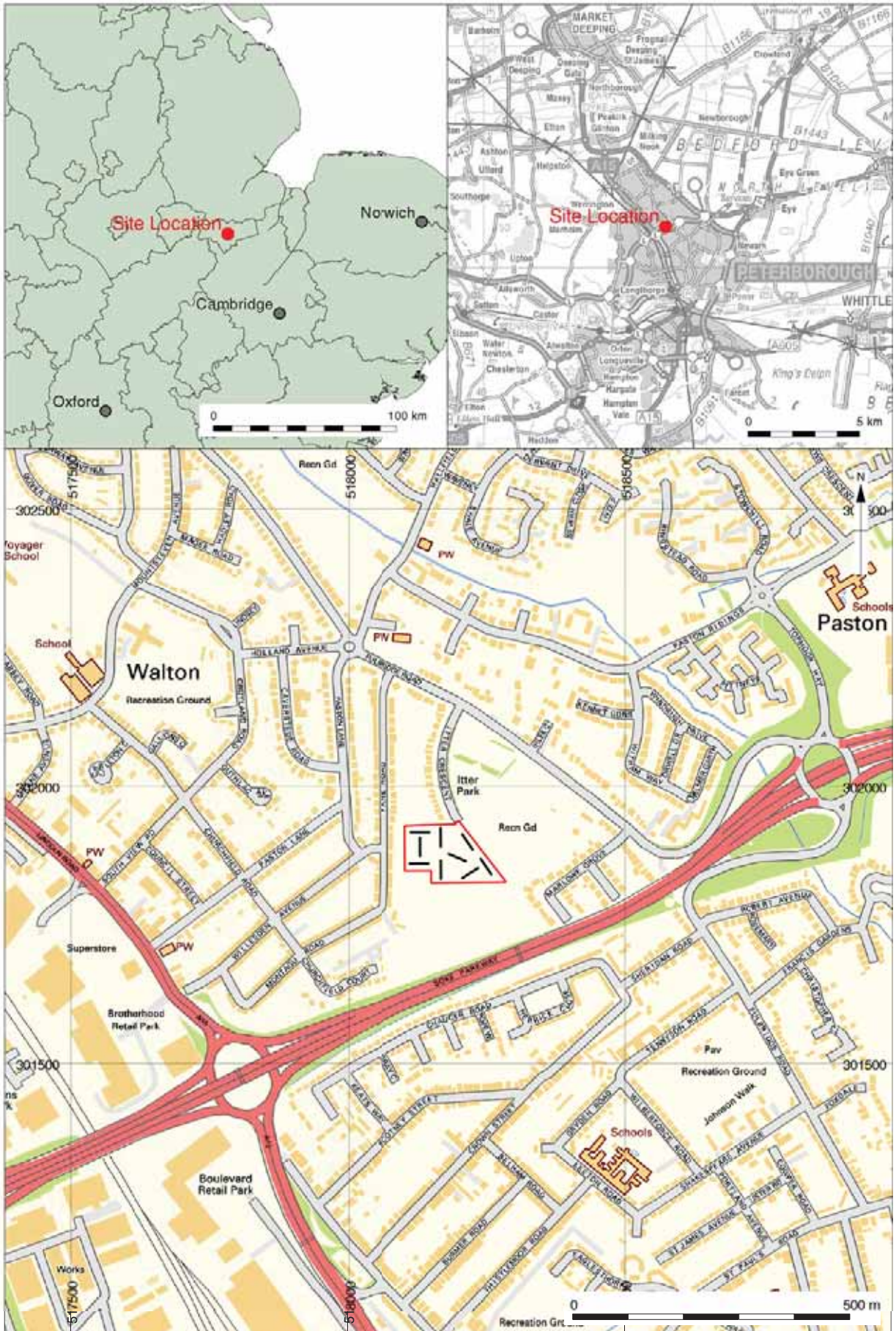
Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Rebecca Casa-Hatton, Peterborough Museum
Project Design Originator	Myk Flitcroft, CgMs Consulting Ltd
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	Alexandra Pickstone

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Peterborough Museum	OA East	Peterborough museum
PETITC11	PETITC11	PETITC11

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents	Digital Media	Paper Media
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map
Metal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Matrices
Stratigraphic		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
Survey		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Misc.
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey



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Figure 1: Site location with trenches (black) and development area outlined (red)

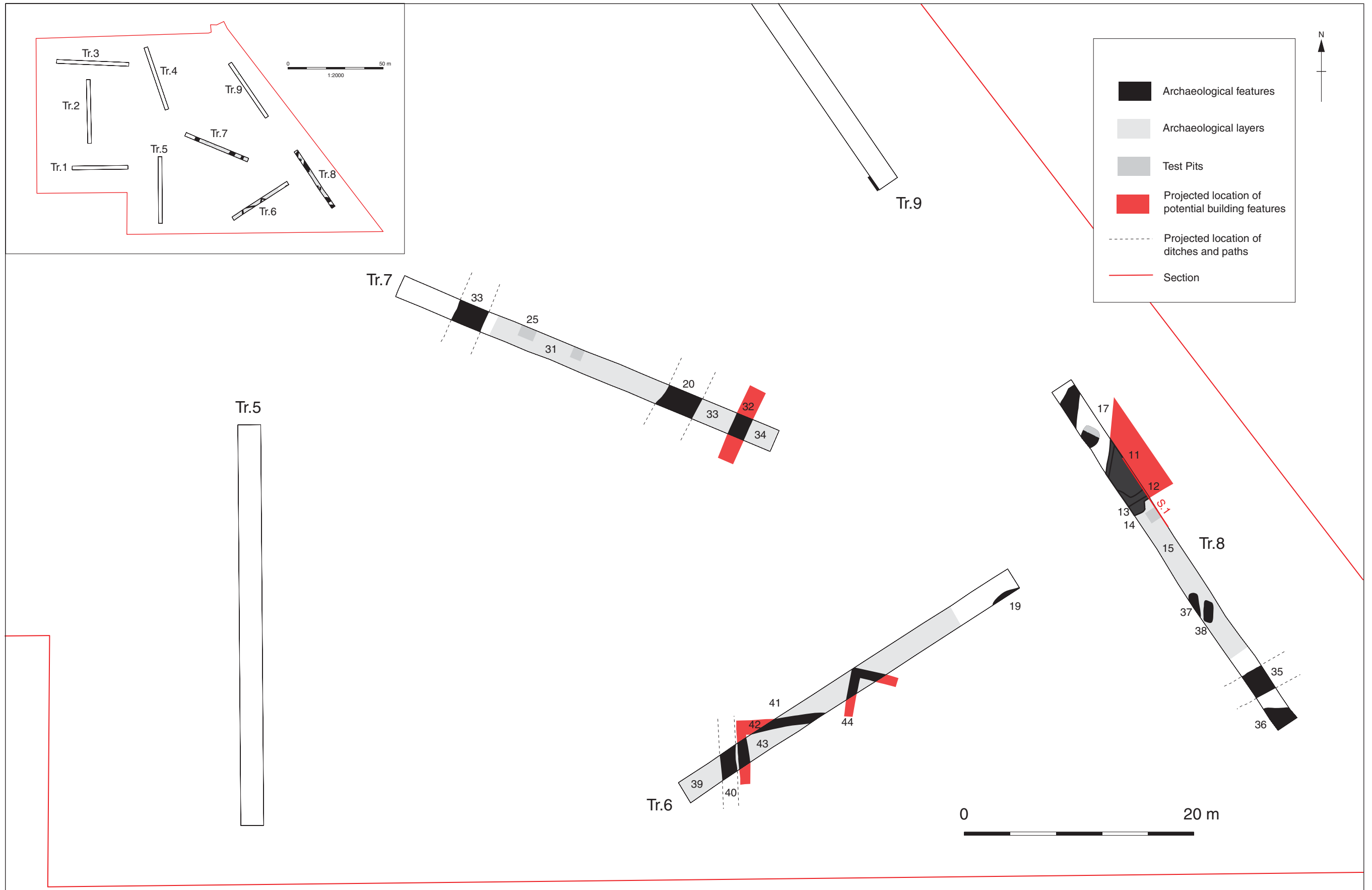


Figure 2: Archaeological features within the trenches



Figure 3: Section 1 and Plates 1-4



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