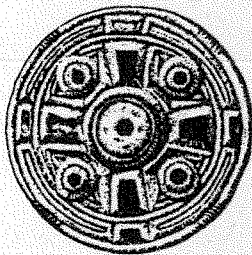


OFFICE COPY.

*Library*



Archaeological Field Unit

**Land at 24-26 Crowland Road, Eye Green,  
Peterborough:  
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Andrew Hatton

2001

**Cambridgeshire County Council**

Report No. B90

Commissioned by Persimmon Homes (East Midlands) Ltd

**Land at 24-26 Crowland Road, Eye Green,  
Peterborough:  
An Archaeological Evaluation  
(NGR TF 2290 0341)**

Andrew Hatton, BSc

August 2001

Editor: Judith Roberts, MA

Illustrator: Jon Cane BA



Report No. B 90

©Archaeological Field Unit  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Fulbourn Community Centre  
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn  
Cambridgeshire CB1 5HD  
Tel (01223) 881614  
Fax (01223) 880946

Arch.Field.Unit@libraries.camcnty.gov.uk  
<http://www.camcnty.gov.uk/library/afu/index.htm>  
<http://www.archaeology.freewire.co.uk>

## SUMMARY

*On the 14th and 15th of August 2001 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on land at 24-26 Crowland Road, Eye Green, Peterborough, in advance of the construction of dwellings and associated ground works. The aim of the intervention was to record and assess the nature of any archaeological evidence encountered and hence to assess the potential for surviving remains. Given the subject site's location within a rich archaeological landscape, and the Iron Age remains discovered immediately to the south, special attention was paid to the identification, interpretation and investigation of deposits and features.*

*During the archaeological evaluation probable quarrying and extensive modern disturbance was observed. This had potentially removed any evidence of early land use.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	SITE BACKGROUND	1
	Planning Background	
	Geology and Topography	
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3
4	METHODOLOGY	4
5	RESULTS	5
6	DISCUSSION	
7	CONCLUSIONS	
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	7

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Location Plan	2
----------	---------------	---

**Land at 24-26 Crowland Road, Eye Green, Peterborough:  
An Archaeological Evaluation  
(NGR TF 2290 0341)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

On the 14th and 15th of August 2001 the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of Cambridgeshire County Council undertook an archaeological evaluation on behalf of Persimmon Homes (East Midlands) Ltd on land at 24-26 Crowland Road, Eye Green, Peterborough. The work was carried out to satisfy a planning condition in advance of development.

**2 SITE BACKGROUND**

**Planning Background**

The proposed development is for the construction of dwellings and associated services covering an area of 0.31 ha. Given that the site is near known archaeological sites, the possibility of there being archaeological remains within the application site determined the requirements for an archaeological evaluation.

The Brief was produced by Ben Robinson, Peterborough City Council Archaeological Service (PCCAS), (Brief for Archaeological Evaluation, 28/06/2001).

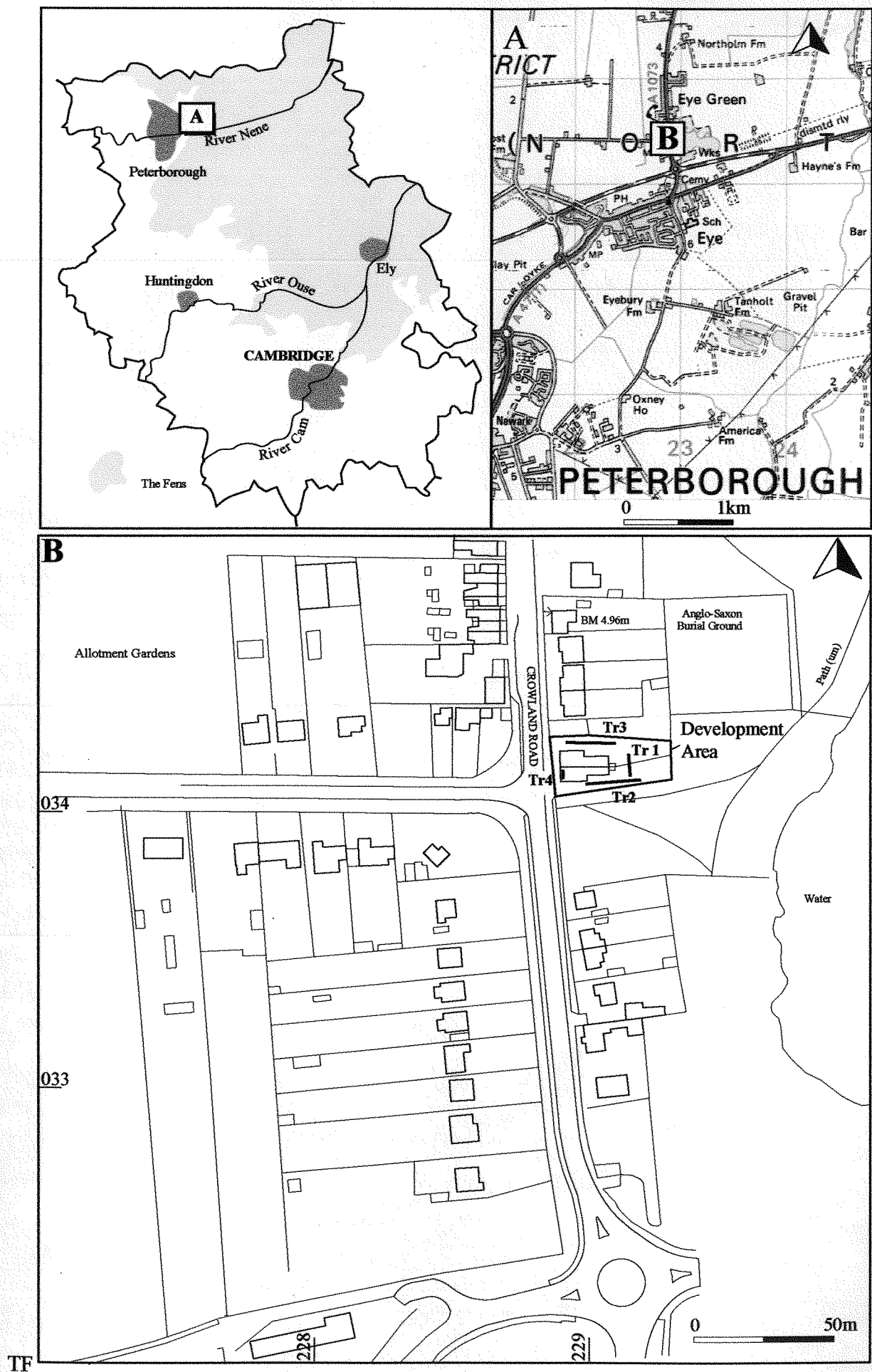
**Site Location**

The development site is located on land at 24-26 Crowland Road, Eye Green, Peterborough, approximately 0.5 km to the north of Eye village (Fig. 1).

**Topography and Geology**

At the time of the archaeological investigation the development site comprised 0.31 hectares of reasonably well drained land that had been used for housing (now demolished) and a private garden. It is centred on NGR TF 2290 0341 at an average height of 4.5m AOD.

The local geology consists of March Gravels overlying Oxford Clay (BGS Sheet 158).



**Figure 1** Trench location plan



### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Eye was known as Aege in the tenth century and later as Eya (Eia) in the eleventh century, meaning 'island' in Old English (Page, 1906). The village developed along one long street (Crowland Road) on one of the three gravel peninsulas that forms the 'island' of Eye.

Eye is not referred to in the Domesday Survey. It is, however, mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle where the settlement was confirmed to Peterborough Abbey in the charter of Wulfhere, and included in the confirmation of King Edgar in the tenth century. After the Conquest, by the beginning of the twelfth century, Peterborough Abbey was holding land in Eye that was confirmed by Richard I and Henry III. Due to the dominance of the Abbey, four separate monastic settlements developed away from the village nucleus, i.e. Eyebury (twelfth century, later to become the village manor), Northolme Grange (early fourteenth century), Singlesole (originally a twelfth century hermitage later developing into a grange), and Tanholt (mainly used for grazing). The land was later divided among a number of small-holders. At the Dissolution the monastic sites were granted to John Bishop of Peterborough, and were later leased to Queen Elizabeth I and sold. The parish was enclosed at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Enclosure Award of 1820 and Map of 1821). The monastic sites returned to the Bishop of Peterborough in 1862 (Page 1906, 490-492, *passim*).

The church of St Matthew's was built around the middle of the nineteenth century, on the site of an earlier chapel. The latter may have been already in use by the sixteenth century, as suggested by the dates of the entries in one of the books of registers (Page 1906, 490-492, *passim*). The church also contains a fourteenth century octagonal font (PCCSMR 50728) the presence of which could indicate a medieval foundation.

The history of the medieval monastic sites at Eye is confirmed by earthwork remains (moats and ditches) that are still visible near Northolme Farm (PCCSMR 0310a and 04235) and Eyebury Farm (PCCSMR 1042).

Post-medieval remains include extant buildings dating from the seventeenth century. In addition, ruined windmills to the south and north of the proposed development, together with quarries and brickworks to the west and south-west respectively, attest to the success of the post-medieval agricultural and industrial economy of Eye.

By contrast evidence of early occupation at Eye is elusive. Scattered finds indicate some activity from the Mesolithic (or even Palaeolithic) period onwards. The PCCSMR records Mesolithic and Bronze Age stray finds (lithic implements, a metal spear and axes respectively). In relation to Eye the closest finds' spots (PCCSMR 08226, 02979, 50494, 50495, 08225 and 08247) appear to be clustered to the south of the development area, at the junction of Crowland Road with Eyebury Road. Recent excavations immediately south of the development site produced Iron Age occupation evidence in the form of pits and ditches (Casa-Hatton 2000). Further away from Eye, the Bronze Age landscape is characterised by the presence of round barrows as part of a dispersed barrow field that stretches across the Catswater towards the Thorney fen edge (Hall

1987, 49, 50).

All around the development site undated cropmarks (mainly ditches and enclosures) are visible in aerial photographs (PCCSMR 50257, 50256, 10101 and 08347), and excavated features (PCCSMR 1072, Welsh 1992) are also indicative of occupation.

Some 1.5km further south, near Tanholt Farm, recent excavations have revealed the presence of a late Bronze Age–early Iron Age enclosed settlement with droveways, round houses, oven/hearths and wells. Later Romano-British enclosures on new alignments that were part of a farmstead complex to the east of the excavation area have also been found (Gibson and White 1998; McFayden 2000). Roman activity is well documented in the area with sites regularly spaced in the parish (Hall 1987, 33, 35).

By contrast, Saxon remains are scanty. Uncertainty rests on the dating of the Catswater, an artificial banked drain that seems to follow the Saxon/medieval fen edge. This contrasts with the straight cut of the Roman Car Dyke across the south-east portion of Eye (Hall 1987, 36-37).

More securely dated are Saxon funerary remains. In close proximity to the development site, less than 100m to the north at TF229- 035- (PCCSMR 03112), two Saxon inhumations (mid-sixth century?) were recovered (Peterborough Museum Records). The burials were accompanied by grave goods in the form of pottery, an iron spearhead and knife, an ivory ring and sleeve clasp. These may have been part of a more extensive inhumation cemetery of uncertain location known from stray finds and from nineteenth century antiquarian observations. Hall locates an early inhumation cemetery found during gravel extraction in 1908 by the west side of Crowland Road, at TF 2275 0360 (Hall 1987, 35, Site 16).

Attempts were made in the past to find the Saxon cemetery. To this aim, an archaeological investigation was conducted in 1991 in the northern portion of the development area. The results revealed that quarrying had disturbed the eastern side of the site. Further to the south, the area appeared to be undisturbed. However, it produced negative evidence (Meadows 1991).

A possible female inhumation was found immediately to the south-east of the development site in the former brickworks area, at TF 2305 0324 (PCCSMR 03055) (Howe 1980, 28). The inhumation was furnished with iron knives and spearheads, a 'small long' bronze brooch with arrowhead design, and a globular pot. It was dated to the middle of the sixth century. Cremations of uncertain date were also recorded (Mr G. W. Abbott's notebook, Peterborough Museum).

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

Four evaluation trenches were excavated (total area 51m x 2m) using a 1.5m wide toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were located across the site in order to achieve maximum coverage of the area available, avoiding trees and the concrete covered footprint of the demolished building.

The trenches were cleaned by hand where it was considered necessary for feature and deposit recognition. The AFU, pro forma recording system was used to record the exposed deposits and was supplemented by photographs. Trenches were located using tapes to offset to standing buildings.

## **5 RESULTS (Fig. 1)**

### **Trench 1**

Trench 1 (17m x 2m), north/south oriented. At the northern end of the trench, a brownish grey topsoil (0.25m thick) overlay a layer of pea-grit/gravel, 0.30m thick. Removal of the pea-grit/gravel revealed a mixed deposit comprising sandy silts together with Victorian debris. A hole was excavated, by machine, through the debris in the centre of the trench for a depth of 0.50m at which point the machining stopped (for safety reasons) without reaching the bottom of the deposit. This sequence was seen at the southern end of the trench, with a slight reduction of the topsoil to 0.20m and the pea-grit/gravel to 0.28m. Removal of the pea-grit again exposed the Victorian debris.

### **Trench 2**

Trench 2 (15m x 2m), east/west oriented. At the south-western end of the trench, a brownish grey, imported, topsoil (0.25m thick) overlay a layer of re-deposited mid-brown sandy silty soil (0.30m thick). Removal of the sandy silty layer revealed a deposit comprised of Victorian debris mixed with soil (0.30m thick). Removal of the layer of debris revealed pea-grit/gravel, which after excavating to a depth of 0.50m was considered to be the gravel natural (see above). The Victorian debris continued for a distance of 7.5m in a westerly direction along the trench. The sequence at the western end of the trench consisted of a brownish grey topsoil (0.20m thick) overlying a mid-brown sandy silt subsoil (0.40m thick). Removal of the subsoil revealed the sandy gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were observed in Trench 2.

### **Trench 3**

Trench 3 (13m x 2m), east/west oriented. At the western end of the trench, a brownish grey topsoil (0.20m thick) overlay a mid-brown sandy silty subsoil (0.30m thick). Removal of the make-up layer revealed the sandy gravel natural geology. This sequence was seen at the north-eastern end, although the topsoil increased in thickness to 0.24m whereas the subsoil remained the same thickness as at the western end.

A single ditch was observed cutting into the natural geology.

**Cut 1** (0.60m wide, 0.15m deep), linear feature aligned south-west/north-east, contained one fill: fill 2, a mid-brown sandy silty soil, which contained no archaeological remains.



#### **Trench 4**

Trench 4 (6m x 1.5m), north/south oriented. Due to the reduced length of the trench only a central measurement was taken, this was as follows: 0.20m of concrete and rubble foundation material, which sealed a mid-brown sandy silty subsoil. Removal of the subsoil exposed the natural sandy clay geology. This trench was located as close as possible to the street frontage in an attempt to identify any archaeological remains, however, none were noted.

### **6 DISCUSSION**

The aims of this study were to highlight the potential for preservation of archaeological remains on the subject site and to identify any remains that may be affected by the proposed development.

The development involves the excavation of foundation and service trenches and road construction.

The key issues specific to the site relate to its location in respect to other known archaeological sites at Eye Quarry which has produced evidence for a late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age settlement in the form of a round house, four post structures and pits of varying sizes (Gibson and White 1998). Similarly, features were identified during the excavation located immediately to the south of the subject site (Casa-Hatton 2000).

### **7 CONCLUSIONS**

A single ditch, 1, identified in Trench 3 produced no artefactual evidence that would suggest a date for this feature. Although the colour and lack of any organic material in the matrix of the deposit (probably caused by leaching) may indicate that feature 1 was reasonably old, given the position of the site in the surrounding prehistoric landscape.

The reason for the lack of pre-seventeenth/eighteenth century archaeology at the eastern end of the subject site can be attributed to excavation of a large pit possibly for the quarrying of gravel and Oxford clay. Later the quarry was used for rubbish disposal. This was then capped with pea-grit/gravel to produce a stable surface on to which subsoil and topsoil could be deposited.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author would like to thank the following people for their valued assistance with this evaluation: Persimmon Homes (East Midlands) Ltd. who commissioned the project and co-operated during the work and Mr Ben

Robinson of PCCAS, Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery, who monitored the project.

Thanks are also due to the staff of the AFU, in particular Spencer Cooper for invaluable work on site, Steve Critchley (Mr Geology) for providing a metal detecting service and valuable information concerning the local geology, and Jon Cane for providing the report illustration. Finally, the author would like to thank Judith Roberts who managed the project and edited the report.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Casa-Hatton, R. 2000. *Middle Iron Age Occupation on Land off Crowland Road, Eye, Peterborough: An Archaeological Evaluation*. Cambridgeshire County Council Report 180.

Gibson, D. and White, L. 1998. *Archaeological Excavations of a Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age Settlement and Romano-British Enclosures at Eye Quarry, Peterborough*. Cambridge Archaeological Unit Rep. No. 268.

Hall, D. 1987. *The Fenland Project, Number 2: Fenland Landscapes and Settlement between Peterborough and March*. East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 35. Cambridgeshire Archaeological Committee.

Horton, A. 1989. *Geology of the Peterborough District, Memoir for 1:50000 Geological Sheet 158 (England and Wales)*. British Geological Survey, London.

Howe, M. 1980, in *Durobrivae* 8 (1980).

McFayden, L. 2000, *Archaeological Excavations at Eye Quarry, Peterborough, Phase 2*. Cambridge Archaeological Unit Rep. No. 355.

Meadows, I. 1991, *The Archaeological Assessment of a Possible Anglo-Saxon Cemetery in Eye, near Peterborough*.

Page, W. (ed.) 1906, *Victoria County History of Northamptonshire, Vol. II*.

Robinson, B. 2000, *Land at 24-26 Crowland Road Eye Green*. Brief for Field Evaluation, 28/06/2001.

Welsh, K. 1992 *An Archaeological Assessment at Eye, near Peterborough* Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit Report A002

## MAPS

BGS Sheet 158, 1:50000  
Enclosure Map 1821



Cambridgeshire  
County Council

Education, Libraries  
and Heritage

The Archaeological Field Unit  
Fulbourn Community Centre  
Haggis Gap  
Fulbourn  
Cambridge CB1 5HD  
Tel (01223) 881614  
Fax (01223) 880946