



Archaeological Watching Brief Report

August 2019

Client: Anglian Water

Issue No: 1

OA East Report No: 2353

NGR: TF 08430 05501



Client Name: Anglian Water
Client Ref No.: SEW-11341-SK-04
Document Title:
Document Type: Watching Brief Report
Report No.: 2353
Grid Reference: TF 08430 05501
Site Code: PETS RB19
Invoice Code: PETS RB19
Receiving Body: Peterborough Museum
Accession No.: EPB 703

OA Document File X:\Active Projects_Use KT\Peterborough\PETS RB19_Station
Location: Road_Barnack\Project Reports

OA Graphics File Location: X:\Active Projects_Use KT\Peterborough\PETS RB19_Station
Road_Barnack\Project Data\Graphics

Issue No: 1
Date: August 2019
Prepared by: Robin Webb (Project Officer)
Checked by: Matt Brudenell (Senior Project Manager)
Edited by: Lawrence Billington (Post-Excavation Project Officer)
Approved for Issue by: Paul Spoerry (Regional Manager)
Signature:



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OA South

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford
OX2 0ES

t. +44 (0)1865 263 800

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridge
CB23 8SQ

t. +44 (0)1223 850 500

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane Mills
Moor Lane
Lancaster
LA1 1QD

t. +44 (0)1524 880 250

e. info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w. oxfordarchaeology.com

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Director and Chief Executive
Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MC1A
Private Limited Company, No: 1618597
Registered Charity, No: 285627
Registered Office: Oxford Archaeology Ltd
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES

Land South of Station Road, Barnack, Peterborough

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Written by Robin Webb.

*With contributions from Carole Fletcher HND BA ACIfA and
illustrations by Isobelle Ward BA MA PCIfA.*

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Summary

Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) undertook a watching brief on land to the south of Station Road, Barnack, Peterborough (NGR TF 08430 05501) ahead of the installation of a new sewage overflow pipe alongside an existing pipe. Works took place over three days – 27th-28th June and 5th July 2019 – and included the stripping of topsoil over the area of the easement and deeper excavation (through the subsoil and natural geology) along the line of the new pipe.

Monitoring of subsoil stripping exposed two ditches, probably representing post-medieval field boundaries, although neither feature contained any datable finds. Metal detecting of site produced a modern coil of wire, a plough tip (neither retained) and an 18th century tombac button.

Acknowledgements

OA East would like to thank Anglian Water for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Rebecca Casa Hatton who monitored the work on behalf of Peterborough City Council.

The project was managed for OA East by Matt Brudenell. The fieldwork was directed by Robin Webb. Digitising was carried out by Isobelle Ward. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the find under the management of Natasha Dodwell and prepared the archive under the supervision of Katherine Hamilton.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 OA East was commissioned by Anglian Water to undertake a watching brief on land to the south of Station Road, Barnack, Peterborough (Fig. 1; NGR TF 08430 05501).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of the 1989 Water Act and subsequent codes of practice. Although the Local Planning Authority did not set a brief for the work, discussions with the Peterborough City Archaeologist and Anglian Water established the scope of work required, which was set out within a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by OA East (Kwiatkowska and Brudenell 2019). This document outlines how OA East implemented the specified requirements and presents its results.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lay to the south of Station Road, Barnack, Peterborough and adjacent to the Torpel Way Footpath, on the northern edge of an agricultural field currently under arable cultivation.
- 1.2.2 The area of works consisted of an area 12m wide and 100m long on the northern boundary of the field, adjacent to the road and following the field boundary. The majority of the work consisted of a topsoil strip of 1200m², with a deeper cut for the sewage overflow pipe alongside an existing pipe trench that ran along the length of the easement.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as Oxford Clay Formation that is overlain by River Terrace Deposits (British Geological Survey online viewer available: <http://bags.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html> accessed 2 July 2019).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background provided here is based largely on a summary provided in the WSI (Kwiatkowska and Brudenell 2019, 3) and includes information derived from on a search of the Peterborough Historic Environment Record (PHER) for an area of 1km radius centred on the site. Records are referred to by their PHER reference number (RN).
- 1.3.2 Neolithic activity has been identified within the 1km search radius, with a series of pits uncovered during excavations at Uffington Road, 730m to the west of the site (RN 52077). Further afield, cropmarks associated with a Neolithic cursus, long barrow and henge (RN 00083, Scheduled Monument PE 253) have been identified 1.2km to the north of the site.
- 1.3.3 Bronze Age activity is attested c.3.2km north-east of the site with a funerary complex, comprising a hengiform monument and double ring-ditch, known as the Barnack Burial (NMR 1860422). In contrast, this period is represented in the area closer to the site by a single findspot of a flanged chisel (RN 00092) recovered from an adjacent field, 350m to the east.

- 1.3.4 Roman activity within a 1km radius of the current site is again dominated by isolated findspots, with a coin (RN 50044) and tile (RN 07907) uncovered c.650m to the south-west. In the wider area, however, remains relating to Roman stone quarries known as 'Hills and Holes' have been identified 1.2km to the south-west (RN 00071), with the area producing a significant quantity of Romano-British pottery. This quarry continued in use into the medieval period. In addition, a Roman villa (RN 51820, Scheduled Monument PE 253) has been identified 1.2km to the north of the site.
- 1.3.5 Beyond the continuation of the quarrying to the south-west of the site, medieval activity in the area can be seen with the series of manorial earthworks within the centre of Barnack village (RN 00077) and the parish church of St John the Baptist (RN 00082) which contains Anglo-Saxon carvings. A trial trench evaluation in 2004 at The Limes, Barnack (450m to the south-west) revealed medieval features; including ditches a fence, and structures (NMR 1817617; Eddisford 2004).
- 1.3.6 A number of listed buildings are located within the village. These include Wilfred Wood Hall (RN 50796) c.900m West of the site, which is said to be of 1796 origin. Also of 18th century date is Close House (RN 50740), and its associated stable and dovecot (RN 50741).
- 1.3.7 Map regression using Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, from 1886 to 1980, shows the field in which the site lies as open countryside on the edge of the village, with the only changes being the disappearance of a boundary towards the eastern edge of the field, and changes to the line of the footpath, whilst the field to the east of the site was given over to allotments at the turn of the 19th/20th century.

2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives were to investigate and record archaeological features or deposits encountered during ground works. Metal detecting was also undertaken of both the excavated areas and spoil heaps to aid the recovery of metal objects.

2.2 Research Frameworks and Standards

2.2.1 This watching brief took place within, and will contribute to the goals of the Regional Research Frameworks relevant to this area:

- i. Glazebrook J. (1997). *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern counties: 1. Resource Assessment*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 3.
- ii. Brown, N. and Glazebrook, J. (2000). *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern counties: 2. Research Agenda and Strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 8.
- iii. Medlycott, M. (2011). *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24.

2.2.2 All work was conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (CIfA 2014b), and Historic England's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (HE 2015).

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 The route of the pipeline and the area of excavation was set out by the Client (Anglian Water) in accordance with the plan attached to the WSI (Kwiatkowska and Brudenell 2019, fig. 1). The ground was scanned with a CAT and Genny to confirm the location of the existing pipe, and machine works were carried out by the client using a tracked 360°-type excavator with a toothless ditching bucket in spits not greater than 0.1m thick. Spoil was stored alongside and within the area of the easement, with topsoil and subsoil kept separate to allow for sequential backfilling of excavations.

2.3.2 All machine excavation took place under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist. Machine excavation took the form of stripping the entire area of the easement (12m by 100m) of topsoil (Plate 1) followed by a 3m wide area being taken down a further 0.3m to reduce the depth, ready for the pipe trench itself to be excavated (Plate 2). The line for the sewage overflow pipe was then stripped to the depth required for works (Plate 3) and an area excavated for the location of a manhole (Plate 4).

2.3.3 Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and hoe as necessary and all features were investigated by hand excavation and recorded. Two ditches were identified and investigated during the watching brief. Excavation has characterised the full archaeological sequence down to undisturbed natural deposits.

- 2.3.4 Metal detecting took place at all stages of excavation (before, during and after stripping) on the area being cleared as well as on the spoil heaps. The metal detector was set to not discriminate against iron. Where metal artefacts were identified they were removed and given a unique small find number (SF1) unless they were obviously modern.
- 2.3.5 A register of the trench and the contexts, drawings, photographs and small finds was kept. All deposits were issued with unique context numbers and documented on proforma sheets comprising factual data and interpretive elements, and a stratigraphic matrix compiled. Sections were drawn showing the trench edge and ditches at a scale of 1:20 and a plan of the site drawn at 1:50, with all section levels tied in to Ordnance Datum. All site drawings include the following information: site name, site code, scale, plan or section number, relevant context or feature numbers, orientation, date and the name or initials of the archaeologist who prepared the drawing.
- 2.3.6 The site grid has been accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and located on the 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area.
- 2.3.7 The photographic record comprises high resolution digital photographs of both general site shots and photographs of particular deposits. Photographs include a scale, north arrow, site code, and feature number (where relevant), unless they are to be used in publications. The photograph register records these details, and photograph numbers are listed on corresponding context sheets.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the watching brief are presented below and include a stratigraphic description of the trench, from east to west. The full details of the trench with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Details of the sole retained find (a tombac button) can be found in Appendix B.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence was fairly uniform. The natural geology of firm dark brownish yellow silty sand and gravel (1) was overlain by a friable mid yellowish brown sandy silt subsoil (2), which in turn was overlain by a friable dark grey brown sandy silt topsoil (3).

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the watching brief were generally good, and the site remained dry throughout. Archaeological features and the existing pipe trench (Plate 5) were easy to identify against the natural geology.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological features and deposits

3.3.1 Two ditches (**8** and **10**; Plates 6 and 7 respectively) were located across the middle of the trench, and both ends of the easement revealed modern dumped deposits containing modern brick, which overlay the subsoil.

3.3.2 The eastern edge of the trench exposed an extensive layer of friable dark brownish grey clay silt (7; Plate 8) that had an amorphous shape in plan (where its edge was exposed), and was up to 0.3m thick. This deposit spread across the width of the easement and for 15m from the eastern end of the site and contained occasional pieces of modern brick.

3.3.3 A single 2.77m wide geological feature (glacial scar **4**) was identified running across the site on a north-west to south-east orientation with wavy edges and sides that when tested varied from steep to gentle. This was 0.4m to the west of the disturbed area (7) and was filled by a loose mid reddish brown silty sand (5).

3.3.4 A further 26m to the west, ditch **8** (Plate 6) was on a north to south alignment and measured 3.98m wide and 0.37m deep with gentle sides and a flat base (Fig. 3, Section 3). This ditch was filled by a friable dark brown grey sandy silt (9) that contained no artefacts.

3.3.5 Located 15.55m to the west was a second ditch (**10**; Plate 7) with a north to south orientation. This ditch measured 0.96m across and 0.24m deep with gentle sides and a concave base (Fig. 3, Section 4). It was filled by a friable dark brown grey sandy silt (11) that contained no artefacts.

3.3.6 Near the western end of the site (0.85m from the edge) and 15.9m to the west of ditch **10** was a second modern deposit/layer (6), a loose dark brownish grey clay silt that contained modern brick and large stones up to 0.16m deep. This deposit was partially exposed against the northern edge of the site, and covered a semi-circular shaped area measuring up to 2.5m across. It was located at the western entrance to the field where there was very little (0.05m) subsoil.

3.4 Finds summary

- 3.4.1 Artefacts that were recovered during the watching brief consisted of metalwork recovered during metal detecting of the site throughout the works. These comprised the tip of a plough and a coil of wire that were both recovered from within the topsoil (3) to the south of the western disturbed area of ground (6), neither of which were retained. The exception was a button (SF 1; Appendix B.1) recovered from the topsoil on the northern edge of the site.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 Archaeological features were clearly visible in the area of the subsoil strip, showing as darker patches against the natural geology, which alongside the dry conditions during the works mean that the results are considered to have a good level of reliability. Stripping of the topsoil revealed that there was differential depth to the subsoil, with natural geology visible through the subsoil in places at the western end of the excavation, whilst further east the depth of the subsoil reached 0.22m. In contrast, other than at the areas of modern disturbance/dumping, the topsoil remained a relatively consistent depth, between 0.18m and 0.24m.

4.2 Watching Brief objectives and results

4.2.1 The project aims and objectives were to investigate and record any archaeological features or deposits encountered during ground works in order to determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present.

4.2.2 Following initial stripping and the subsequent excavation of the pipe trench, two ditches were identified – a broad but shallow boundary ditch (**8**) cutting across the middle of the easement and a less substantial, parallel, ditch to the west (**10**). Neither of these features produced dating evidence. They are not shown on any of the late 19th and 20th century historic maps which have been consulted (Section 1.3), but they share an alignment with the modern field boundaries and seem most likely to relate to post-medieval field boundaries of some kind, although an earlier date cannot be entirely discounted. The deposit at the western end of the easement (6) is likely to have been laid down to consolidate the entrance to the field in modern times and the more extensive layer encountered at the eastern end of the site was also clearly deposited in recent times.

4.2.3 The single button (SF1) that was recovered is of 18th century date and is likely to have been torn from an item of clothing. Its recovery with a distorted attachment loop and from a field with a footpath indicates that it may have been an item of casual loss by someone as they were walking along the Torpel Way footpath, which although now runs along the northern and eastern edges of the field, is shown as cutting diagonally across the field on late 19th century mapping (see Section 1.3).

4.2.4 The low level of finds recovered from the stripping of the easement suggest that there has been limited activity within the field, whilst the shallow depth of the subsoil at the western end suggests that if features were present in that area there may have been some truncation, whilst the eastern end would have seen less truncation from ploughing.

4.3 Significance

4.3.1 The watching brief has identified the presence of undated ditches in the centre of the trench. Although sharing an alignment with the modern field boundaries in the area, there is no indication of these features on historic maps, with the site shown lying

within a single open field from at least as early as the 19th century, suggesting that these features relate to earlier activity.

APPENDIX A DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench contains two ditches, a glacial scar and modern deposits. Consists of ploughsoil (3) and subsoil (2) overlying a natural geology (1) of silt sand.					Length (m)	100
					Width (m)	12
					Avg. depth (m)	0.23
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1	Layer	-	-	Natural geology	-	-
2	Layer	-	-	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Topsoil	Button (SF1)	-
4	Cut	2.77	-	Cut of glacial scar	-	-
5	Fill	2.77	-	Fill of glacial scar 4	-	-
6	Layer	2	-	Modern disturbance	CBM	Modern
7	Layer	15	0.3	Modern disturbance	CBM	Modern
8	Cut	3.98	0.37	Cut of ditch	-	-
9	Fill	3.98	0.37	Fill of ditch 8	-	-
10	Cut	0.96	0.24	Cut of ditch	-	-
11	Fill	0.96	0.24	Fill of ditch 10	-	-

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Button

By Carole Fletcher

Introduction and Methodology

B.1.1 The watching brief produced a single copper alloy (tombac) button (SF1) from the topsoil, context 3. The functional categories used are those defined by Crummy in 1983 and 1988: Category 1 objects of personal adornment of dress. Bailey (2004) was referenced for identification and dating.

Assemblage and Discussion

B.1.2 *Category 1 objects of personal adornment of dress:* A single solid, discoidal (18mm in diameter) tombac button, with a convex front and slightly convex back (4.5mm), was recovered from the topsoil (3). The button is in good condition, the upper surface is decorated (engine-turned) with an eight-petalled flower. The reverse has a centrally placed copper alloy attachment loop or eye with light corrosion. The loop has become slightly distorted and bent to one side (7.5mm high); this distortion has flattened and damaged the raised or soldered cone from which the loop protrudes.

B.1.3 The button dates to the 18th century and was probably a casual loss from an item of clothing. Buttons were used on coats, pockets, hats, breeches, leggings, cuffs and shoes (Bailey 2004, 40), so the chances of loss at any one time would have been relatively high; the distortion of the loop suggests it may have been torn from an item of clothing.

Retention, dispersal or display

B.1.4 This find is of little significance. If no further work is undertaken, this statement acts as a full record and the button may be retained, possibly used for educational purposes, or deselected prior to archival deposition.

APPENDIX C BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Cifa 2014a. *Code of Conduct*. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
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APPENDIX D OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-359606		
Project Name	Station Road, Barnack		
Start of Fieldwork	27 June 2019	End of Fieldwork	5 July 2019
Previous Work	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	PETSRB19	Planning App. No.	-
HER Number	EPB 703	Related Numbers	-

Prompt	Water Act 1989 and subsequent code of practice
Development Type	Pipeline/cables
Place in Planning Process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography – interpretation | <input type="checkbox"/> Grab-sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-core | <input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording of Fabric/Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Augering | <input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search | <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief |

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Ditch	Uncertain	Button	Post Medieval (1540 to 1901)
Layer	Modern (1901 to present)	Nail	Modern (1901 to present)

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Address (including Postcode) Land south of Station Road, Barnack, Stamford, Peterborough PE9 3DW
District	Peterborough	
Parish	Barnack	
HER office	Peterborough	
Size of Study Area	1200m ²	
National Grid Ref	TF 08430 05501	

Project Originators

Organisation	OA East
Project Brief Originator	Peterborough City Archaeologist
Project Design Originator	OA East

Project Manager	Matt Brudenell
Project Supervisor	Robin Webb

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	Peterborough Museums	PETSRB19
Digital Archive	ADS	PETSRB19
Paper Archive	Peterborough Museums	PETSRB19

Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Remains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media

Database	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images (Digital photos)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Text	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/>

Paper Media

Aerial Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context Sheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/>
Map	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matrices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microfiche	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miscellaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research/Notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further Comments

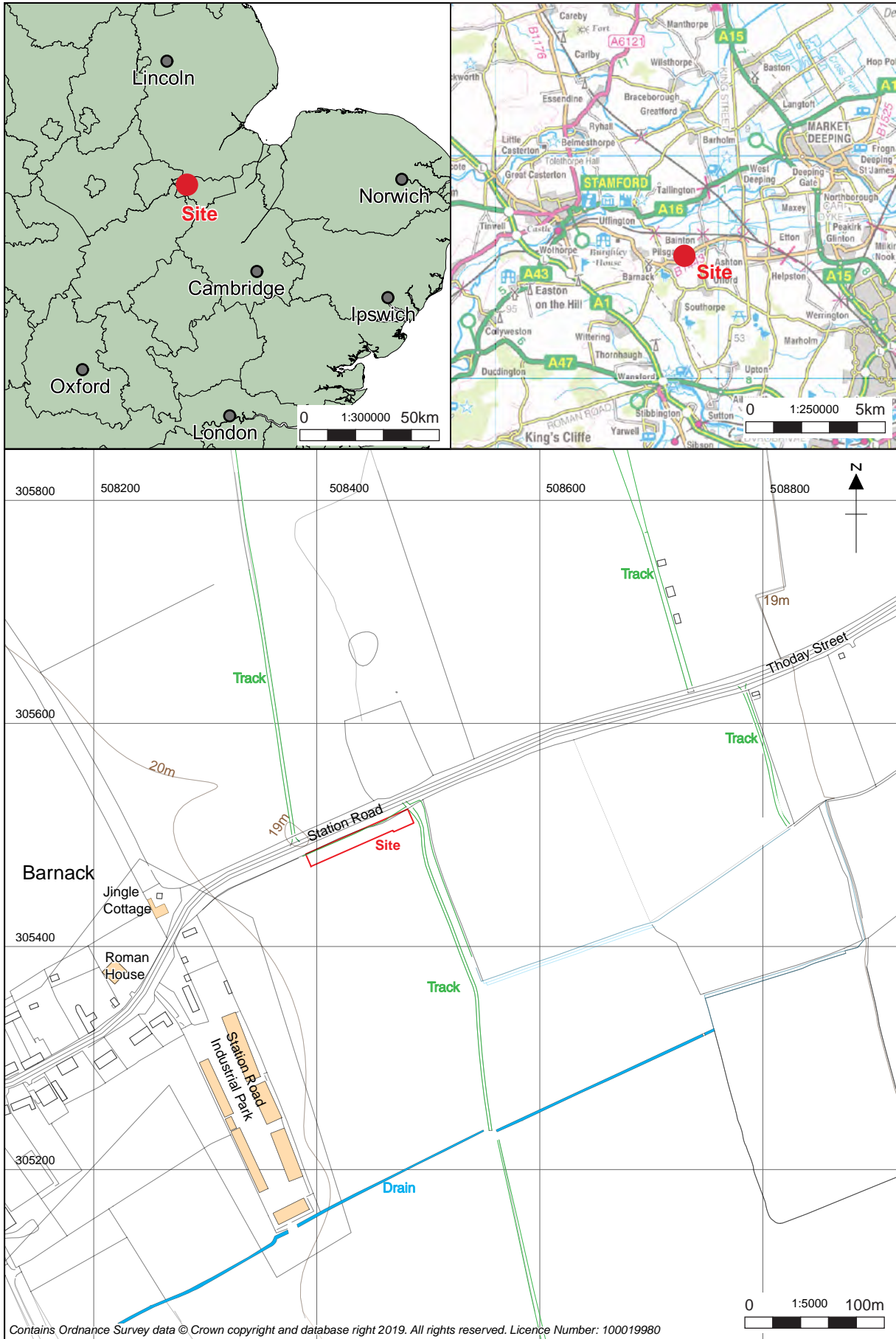


Figure 1: Site location showing the striped area (red)



Plate 1: Topsoil stripping



Plate 2: Subsoil stripping



Plate 7: Ditch 10, looking south



Plate 8: Topsoil stripping at the eastern end revealing an area of disturbance 7, looking west



Plate 3: Digging the line of the pipe trench



Plate 4: Digging for the manhole



Plate 5: The line of the existing pipe trench



Plate 6: Ditch 8, looking west



**Head Office/Registered Office/
OA South**

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarchaeology.com
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1QD

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



Director: Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MCifA
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