

An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Old Brickworks, Old Fletton, Peterborough



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



November 2008

Client: CgMs

OA East Report No: 1026

OASIS No:

NGR: TL 5188 2965

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Old Brickworks. Old Fletton,
Peterborough (TL5188 2965)**

Site Code: PETFBW07

Date of Works: November 07-September 08

Report No:1026

Excavators: Glenn Bailey & Spencer Cooper

Client: CgMs

Report Date: November 2008

Report Number: 1026
Site Name: Old Brickworks, Old Fletton
HER Event No:
Date of Works: November 2007 - September 2008
Client Name: CgMs
Client Ref:
Planning Ref: 05/01078/OUT
Grid Ref: NGR 5188 2965
Site Code: PETFBW07
Finance Code: PETFBW07
Receiving Body: Peterborough Museum

Accession No:

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Date: Nov 08

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Summary

Between November 2007 and September 2008, OA East carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Old Brickworks, Old Fletton, Peterborough (NGR 5188 2965). The monitoring was carried out during preliminary infrastructure works in preparation for development. In August and September 2008 further observations were made on drainage works in the south-eastern part of the development area.

No archaeological deposits were recorded on site because of extensive truncation related to the former brickworks.

1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site lies to the south of the modern centre of New Fletton, Peterborough, on the flood plain of the lower Nene Valley. It is divided into four distinct blocks of land, the present Transport Depot, the land to the west of the A15 London Road, the land to the east of the A15 London Road and the land to the south of Hicks Lane. The site as a whole is bounded to the north and east by railway lines. A light industrial estate occupies the land to the west of the site. The A1139 Fletton Parkway bounds the southern side of the site (Fig.1 outlined in red).

The majority of the site is derelict land, except for the Transport Depot that is still in operation under lease to GKL Ltd. This comprises a tarmac and reinforced concrete surfaced yard with engineering workshops and offices. Much of the land in the east and west of the site is covered by hard-standing, where the former buildings and brick yards were located, and aggregate associated with the former tramways and sidings interspersed with dense undergrowth. The ground surface is roughly level but varies across the site from c10m to 18m OD, in general it slopes gently downwards towards the north-east corner of the site, near to the railway. The Transport Depot is located at the highest point and there is a large subsoil spoil heap in the east of the site.

The site lies within an area of geologically unsurveyed land to the south of the River Nene in Peterborough. Excavations on the site identified the geology as Lower Oxford Clay overlain by First Terrace Nene River Gravels similar to other evaluations in the vicinity (JSAC 2006). There is no evidence for the 3rd century deposit of clay alluvium identified at the Ikea Distribution Centre to the east, and no evidence for brickearth deposition in more recent times as on the land to the south of the A1139 Fletton Parkway.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

An archaeological Desk-based Assessment (DBA) was conducted by CgMS, formerly JSAC, in 2002 which confirmed that the proposed development site lay in an area of recorded prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity (JSAC 2002). The DBA identified a range of archaeological interests summarised below:

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) provided details for scattered finds of Neolithic date recorded to the west and south-west of the development area (SMR 01633a; 01412; 51121).

Bronze Age occupation evidence was recorded in the vicinity, located c300m to the east of Wyman's Bridge, a railway bridge on Hicks Lane, which lies to

the east of the development area (SMR 18196; 1633). The evidence comprised food vessels, inhumations and a cinerary urn containing cremated human remains.

- A series of pit dwellings of Iron Age origin were located 1km to the east of the site that produced animal bone and pottery (SMR 1348). Quarrying activity has since destroyed these features.
- Roman material was identified within the western portion of the development area during the construction of the London Brick Company's number 4 yard. This material comprised coins, pottery, pin, human burials and "huts" (SMR 1713). Quarrying has since destroyed the area.
- Excavations in the historic core of Fletton have produced evidence for Saxon remains including beads and a cremation urn (SMR 8251; 50585). Sunken floored dwellings and an extensive Saxon cemetery were located c1km to the north of the site in the historic core of Fletton (SMR 1716).
- The place-name "Fletton" was first recorded in a charter dated 664AD, largely based on the Domesday accounts of Peterborough's estates (Sawyer et al 1968).

The name alludes to the origin of 9th-11th century settlement in the vicinity and comprises two elements derived from Old English, *fleot* identifies an estuary or confluence for a river, presumably the River Nene, and the second element – *tun* is generally accepted to infer the presence of a small manorial farmstead or village (Ekwall 1960). Stray finds and areas of ridge and furrow cultivation were present in the surrounding area of the village (SMR 1422; 1408; 50692).

- The site became brickworks in the late 1880s and belonged to a succession of successful businesses, the most recent of which was the Orton Brickworks. The site continued in use throughout the early 20th century, by the mid- 1950s it was densely packed with brickyards, tramways, sidings, spoil heaps and extraction pits with only relatively small pockets of land undisturbed. Industrial archaeological deposits for the period of its operation were largely destroyed in the 1970s during land clearance on the site when the majority of the brick pits were reinstated with pulverised fuel ash (PFA). The brickworks were finally closed after this work in the 1980's.

- 2.1 The DBA demonstrated that substantial parts of the development area had been disturbed by previous quarrying. However 4 areas were identified where archaeological remains may survive (A-D) and these were evaluated in 2006 (Brown 2006). Whilst the evaluation did show that these areas had not been subject to quarrying, they did reveal extensive truncation down to natural substrata in most areas. Undated (probably post-medieval) features were recorded in Area C.

3 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief 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.

The Brief required that a watching brief be conducted in the area designated by the specification (Fig.2). The area of investigation was located between; large settlement ponds to the west, the East Coast Mainline (Railway) to the east, the westbound railway spur off Fletton Junction to the north and the Fletton Parkway to the south. Further investigation included drainage works in the southern part of the development area.

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.

Attendance was based on the agreement between consultant and curator for works that required monitoring. Site conditions were adverse for the works carried out in November 2007. Heavy rain fell during the site stripping and monitoring. The visits in September 2008 were in dry conditions.

4 RESULTS

The site was divided into four areas for the Watching Brief (A-D) based on the four areas of potential survival. Figure 1 shows the location of the development area in respect to the southern part of the city of Peterborough. Figure 2 illustrates the degree to which the site has been subject to disturbance – the remains of substantial buildings associated with the “Old Brick Works” and the massive areas of back-filled extraction pits and highlights the areas within and without the remit of this watching brief. These four areas were visited during infrastructure works in November 2007 and intrusive groundworks were monitored.

4.1 Area A

Area A was observed to have been subject to near complete back-filling by material brought in from other sites. These included fossil-bearing mudstone

deposits with no associated anthropogenic artefacts or deposits. The fossils within the mudstone deposits appeared to be exclusively derived from marine shellfish.

4.2 Area B

Area B was considerably more extensive than Area A. The northern and north-eastern limits of this area had extensive zones of intact and disturbed brickwork. Upon investigation the intact brickwork was single course and the disturbed bricks were a result of perturbation during landscaping activities associated with the current development.

The remainder of Area B under archaeological investigation was along the eastern half of the area. This zone was similar to the northern zone in having areas of intact and disturbed brickwork, although the intact brickwork was less in evidence than further north. The surface flooding was most frequent within this zone, which made traversing it and subsequent investigation prone to greater difficulty.

4.3 Area C

Area C was monitored and seen to be still in use by industrial processing buildings and commercial offices. The industrial zone was not intensively studied due to the safety hazard from large trucks driving around the busy and dusty area. The commercial zone was built on, paved and landscaped to such an extent so as to make further investigations impossible.

4.4 Area D

Area D can be spatially split into two zones. The south westernmost of the two zones (identified as NC2) was monitored and shown to have been subject to massive infilling by waste bricks. The depth to which this deposit was filled with bricks was shown in a section from the storm drain trench being cut at the time of the site visit. A depth in excess of 3m was observed for the waste bricks deposit. Elsewhere, silt and clay deposits containing a significant level of brick fragments were observed.

The second zone of Area D lay to the north-east, beyond a “newt fence” and conventional chain-link fence, these barriers preventing monitoring on this zone. Vegetative growth in excess of one metre high covered the majority of the surface, but where it was possible to see through this, brick laden silts and clays were observed.

4.5 Transport Depot

The majority of this area was within the footprint of existing buildings, car parks and roads. The remaining percentage showed no evidence of surviving

archaeological remains.

4.6 Drainage Channel

Most of the trenches associated with the Drainage works were located in Area C in the south-eastern part of the development area. Large sections of this storm drain trench were studied on foot. Observations showed that there was in excess of 5m in depth of early 20th century waster brick deposits. Similarly to the west of the storm drain silt and clay layers mixed with modern brick fragments over 3m deep were noted. Earlier deposits were not evident and there was an absence of subsoil. It should also be noted that the spoilheap was extensively scanned for artefacts. No pre-20th century artefacts were recorded.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1

During this watching brief, it was found that the areas under archaeological investigation were devoid of undisturbed archaeological deposits that contained evidence of human activity or settlement. This is in line with the previous findings from the archaeological evaluation carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology's field team. The presence of Brickworks from the 19th century through to 1980s was a major factor on the deposit model and explains why there is no early surviving archaeological deposits. None of the construction trenches produced residual pre-20th^h century artefacts and no significant archaeological deposits were uncovered.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank CgMs who commissioned the work on behalf of O&H Hampton Ltd. James Drummond-Murray managed the project. The authors undertook all the fieldwork investigation, consulting Rachel Fosberry and Alasdair Brookes on potential sampling methods and techniques..

Ben Robinson, who was consulted prior to the work taking place, wrote the brief for archaeological works.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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JSAC, 2006, *An Archaeological desk-based assessment of Land at Hampton in Peterborough*, John Samuels Archaeological Consultants.

APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	Oxfordar3-59133			
Project Name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at The Old Brickworks, Old Fletton, Peterborough.			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	01-11-2007	Finish	30-09-2008
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	No	

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	PETFBW07	Planning App. No.	05/0178/OUT
HER No.	N/A	Related HER/OASIS No.	N/A

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
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Please select all techniques used:

<input checked="" 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 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
	Modern 1901 to Present	N/A	Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambs	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	Peterborough	Old brickworks, Old Fletton, North of Fletton parkway. Peterborough	
Parish	Peterborough		
HER	Peterborough		
Study Area	50 ha	National Grid Reference	TL 188 965

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Ben Robinson
Project Design Originator	Roderick Dale
Project Manager	James Drummond Murray
Supervisor	Spencer Cooper

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
N/A...	OA East	
N/A	PETFBW07.	N/A

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
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 Bones	<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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

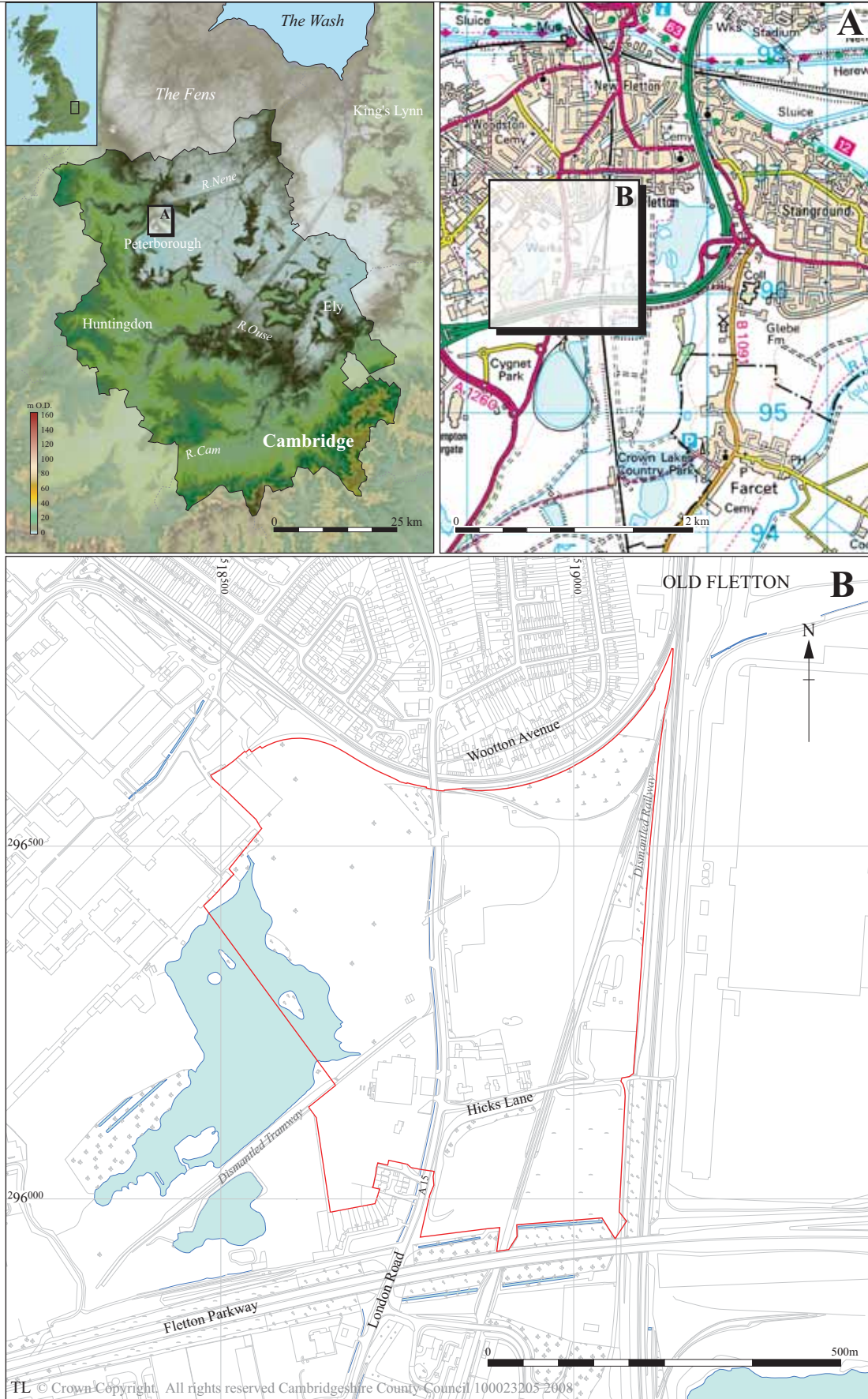


Figure 1: Site location map

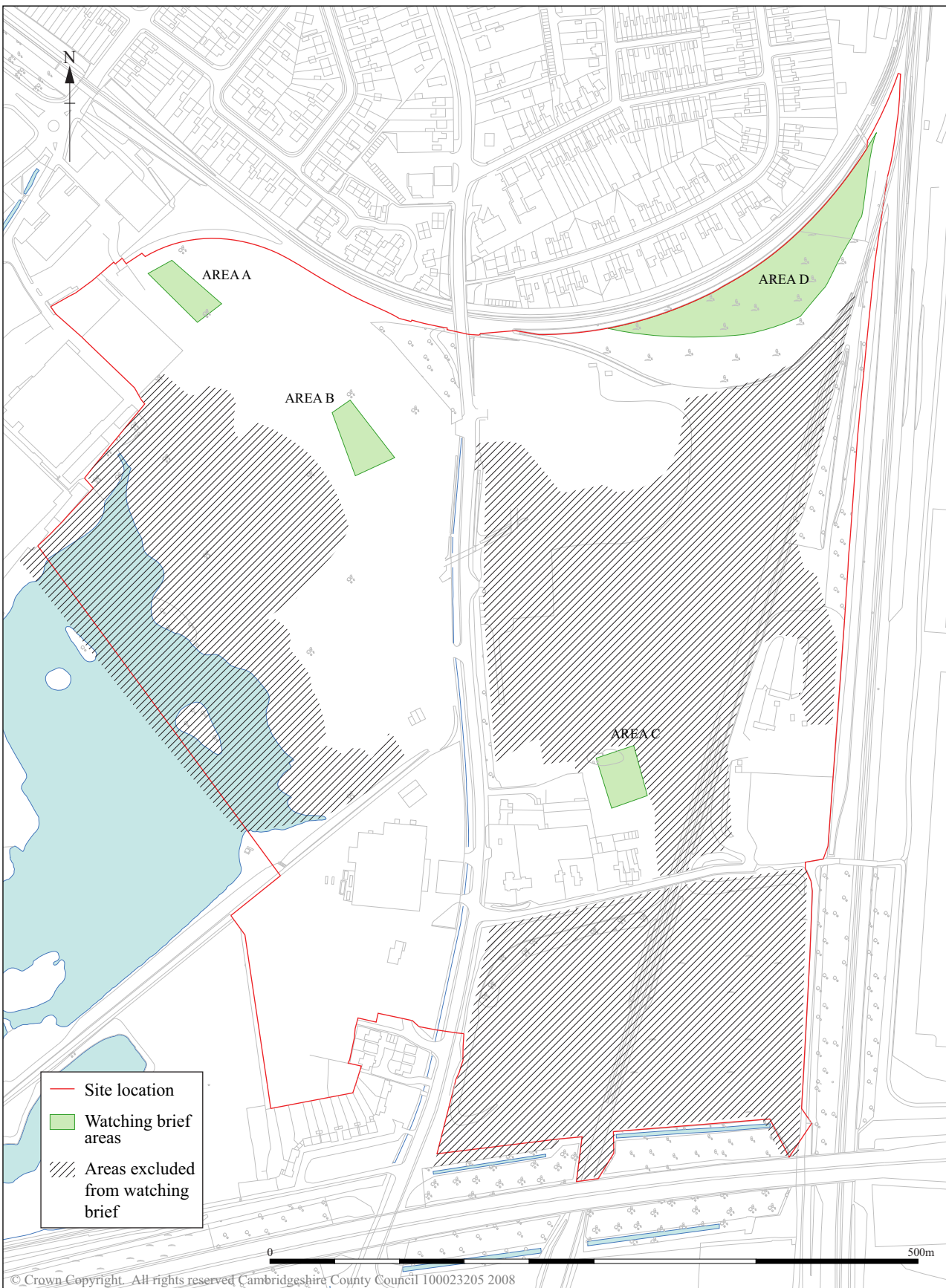


Figure 2: Areas covered by the watching brief



Plate 1: Typical section through Area A



Plate 2: Typical section through Area D



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