Archaeological Field Unit

Archaeological Investigations at Paston Parkway, Peterborough

A. Hatton

2004

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 754

Commissioned by Hepher Dixon Ltd on behalf of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)

Archaeological Investigations at Paston Parkway, Peterborough

A. Hatton BSc HND

2004

Editor: S, P. Macaulay BA, MPhil, AIFA
Illustrator: C. Begg BSc

Report No. 754

Cambridgeshire County Council
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn
Cambridgeshire CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 576201
Fax (01223) 880946

arch.field.unit@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
http://edweb.camcnty.gov.uk/afu

SUMMARY

On the 19th and 20th August 2004 staff from the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on land to the north-west of Car Dyke and Eye Road, Peterborough (521331/301760). The aim of the investigation was to record and assess the nature of any archaeological evidence encountered and hence to assess the potential for surviving remains, given the subject sites location adjacent to the Roman Car Dyke Canal.

During the excavation of the five trenches and six test pits extensive post-medieval and modern disturbance in the form of quarrying activity was observed. This had potentially removed any evidence of early land use.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Archaeological Investigations at Paston Parkway, Peterborough

1 INTRODUCTION

On the 19th and 20th August 2004 staff from the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted an archaeological evaluation on land to the north-west of Car Dyke and Eye Road, Peterborough (521331/301760).

The work was carried out at the request of Hepher Dixon Ltd on behalf of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). The evaluation was conducted in advance of the construction of a new KFC restaurant.

The site lies to the north-west of the Roman Car Dyke Canal and as a result was considered to be archaeologically sensitive.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

According to the British Geological Survey, the site lies on Oxford clay (BGS 1974).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The study area lies within a zone of extensive archaeological research, which is discussed and summarised in the Fenland Survey project publication (Hall 1987). Archaeological investigations have been carried out in the area since the late 19th century. The more recent work includes archaeological evaluation at Eames Garden Centre (located 750m to the south of the subject site) where a kiln and shallow pit were identified neither of which produced any dating material (Hatton 1999). A second evaluation was carried out immediately south of the subject site, which produced evidence of possible bank material (SMR no 51252) associated with Car Dyke (Joynson & Mackinder 2003).

Archaeological material recovered from the vicinity of the site includes: Palaeolithic stone tools (SMR nos 2976 and 8247), Mesolithic and early Neolithic stray finds (SMR nos 2977 and 8225) as well as flint tools and flakes dates to the later Neolithic period (SMR nos 2998 and 2999).

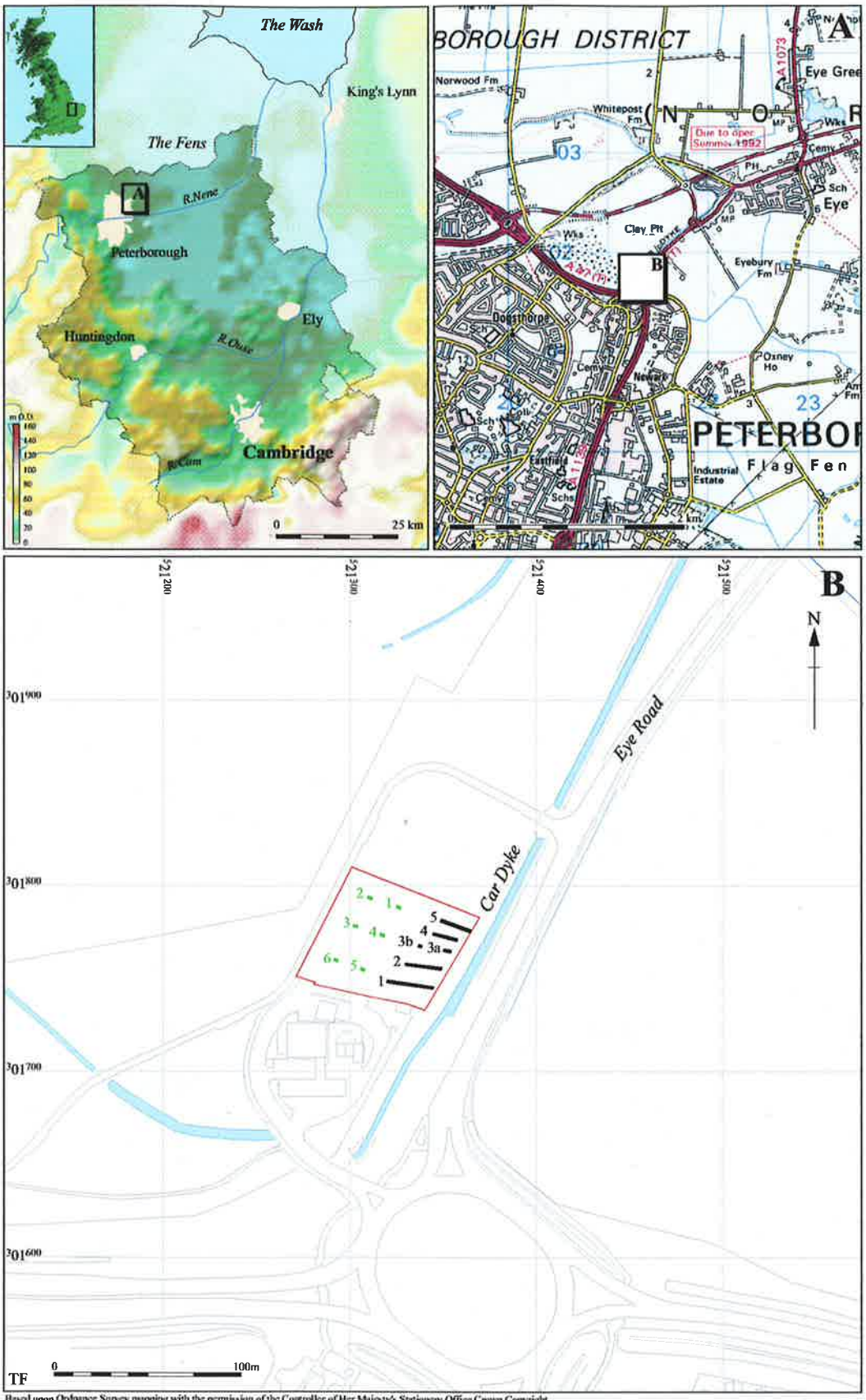

Figure 1 *Location of trenches (black) and test pits (green) with the development area outlined (red)*

Settlement evidence has also been identified associated to the Bronze Age (SMR nos 2963, 2985 and 3012) as well as the presence of barrows (SMR nos 3002 and 3111). Iron age settlement activity has also been identified (10595) as well as a Iron Age coin (SMR no 3011) and other iron Age remains (SMR no 3025).

Roman remains in the vicinity is the Car Dyke Canal a scheduled Ancient Monument (SMR no 2982) that is located immediately to the east. The Car Dyke is a linear monument that may have been a watercourse connecting the River Witham, near Lincoln, to the River Nene at Peterborough, a length in the region of some 92km. The Cambridgeshire Car Dyke, around Waterbeach, was once thought to be part of this same system, although recent survey has not located a link between the two monuments. The Cambridgeshire Car Dyke is also of a different character to that recorded between Lincoln and Peterborough (Macaulay and Reynolds 1994, Macaulay 1997).

As early as 1712, John Morton suggested that the Car Dyke was Roman and was used in a dual function as a drainage channel and canal. Fortyfive years later, William Stukeley accepted the Roman date and went on to suggest that grain from the fens was transported along the Car Dyke to supply the Roman legions in York, an idea that has persisted until quite recently. Brian Simmons, one of the foremost researchers into the Car Dyke, suggested a catchwater function, part of an elaborate system involving secondary watercourses, including the *Midfendic*. More recently, the idea of an Imperial Estate boundary has gained credence (English Heritage website 2002).

At present, there is no clear single hypothesis that explains the variations in scale and apparent function for the whole of the monument, and a synthetic answer may not be forthcoming. The Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire sections are physically and perhaps functionally unconnected, although they may have been contemporary, and it is possible that various sections were constructed for different reasons to serve a range of purposes (Babtie 2003).

Human Remains also dated to the Roman period (through the recovery of pottery found close by) were located to the north-west of the subject site (SMR no 00182).

4 METHODOLOGY

Five trenches were excavated with a total length of 86.6m, and a width of 1.6m, as well as six Tests Pits each measuring 1.6 x 2.2 were opened using a mechanical excavator with a 1.6m ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist (Fig. 1). Because of the amount of disturbance identified during the initial excavation of Trench 3 (A), it was decided to abandon the trench. A second trench (3B) was then excavated on the same alignment as Trench 3A

but further to the north-west. As with Trench 3A, modern disturbance was identified which led to the trench being abandoned after a short distance (see below).

Each trench was located at 10m intervals along the length boundary that runs alongside Car Dyke. A distance of 9m had to be kept away from Car Dyke in order not to do any damage to the monument. The trenches were also located at approximately 90 degrees angles to Car Dyke in order to give maximum coverage of the area. This type of trench layout also aided in the identification of the edge of the modern quarry. The six test pits were located across the north-western half of the site, as a test to identify if any undisturbed land still existed.

The trenches were cleaned by hand where appropriate, planned, photographed, and recorded using the AFU's single recording system.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 25m long and oriented NW-SE. It contained a single Victorian rubbish pit, which had been truncated by the excavation of a quarry. At the south-eastern end of the trench up to 0.26m of greyish brown redeposited sandy silty topsoil (1) overlay 0.38m of dark greyish brown silty clay buried topsoil (2). At the south-eastern end of the trench the buried topsoil (2) sealed light grey brown silty clay (3) which ran for a distance of 2m. This sequence remained the same for a distance of 15.5m from the south-eastern end of the trench at which point the Victorian pit truncates the buried topsoil (2). The remaining 9.5m showed only re-deposited topsoil and quarry infilling in section.

The natural geology identified in the trench consisted of Oxford Blue Clay, which appeared to slope down towards Car Dyke at the south-eastern end of the trench. Two fragments of possible Roman tile were recovered from the trench.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 1 was 25m long and oriented NW-SE. At the south-eastern end of the trench up to 0.40m of greyish brown re-deposited sandy silty topsoil (1), which contained large amounts of brick rubble overlay up to 0.26m of light brown silty clay (3). A single sherd of 19th century pottery was recovered from the fill. This sequence remained the same for a distance of 14.5m from the south-eastern end of the trench at which point the quarry truncates layer 3. Although the depositional sequence remained the same the thickness varied

with the re-deposited topsoil (1) decreasing to 0.38m and the light brown silty clay (3) also decreased to 0.04m.

The natural geology identified in the trench consisted of Oxford Blue Clay, which appeared to slope down towards Car Dyke at the south-eastern end of the trench.

No archaeological features or artefacts were recovered from this trench.

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was excavated in two segments (3A and 3B), 3A was 4m long and oriented NW/SE. Excavation of the trench revealed in section 0.05m of re-deposited greyish brown re-deposited sandy silty topsoil (1), which in turn sealed brick rubble, which possibly acted as foundation material for a road associated with the quarry.

Trench 3B was located 5m to the north-west of 3A and measured 2m in length. The section showed re-deposited topsoil (1) 0.20m thick and quarry infill with a visible depth of 0.50m.

No archaeological features or artefacts were recovered from this trench.

5.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was 13.60m long and oriented NW-SE. At the south-eastern end of the trench up to 0.20m of greyish brown re-deposited sandy silty topsoil (1), which contained large amounts of brick rubble overlay up to 0.40m of light brown silty clay (3). This sequence remained the same for a distance of 9.4m from the south-eastern end of the trench at which point the quarry truncates layer 3. Although the depositional sequence remained the same the thickness varied with the re-deposited topsoil (1) increasing to 0.22m and the light brown silty clay (3) reducing to 0.10m.

The natural geology identified in the trench consisted of Oxford Blue Clay, which appeared to slope down towards Car Dyke at the south-eastern end of the trench.

No archaeological features or artefacts were recovered from this trench.

5.5 Trench 5

Trench 5 was 17m long and oriented NW-SE. At the south-eastern end of the trench up to 0.40m of greyish brown re-deposited sandy silty topsoil (1), which contained large amounts of brick rubble overlay up to 0.42m of light brown silty clay (3). This sequence remained the same at the north-western end of the trench, with the re-deposited topsoil (1) continuing at a constant thickness, where as the light brown silty clay (3) reduced in thickness to 0.12m.

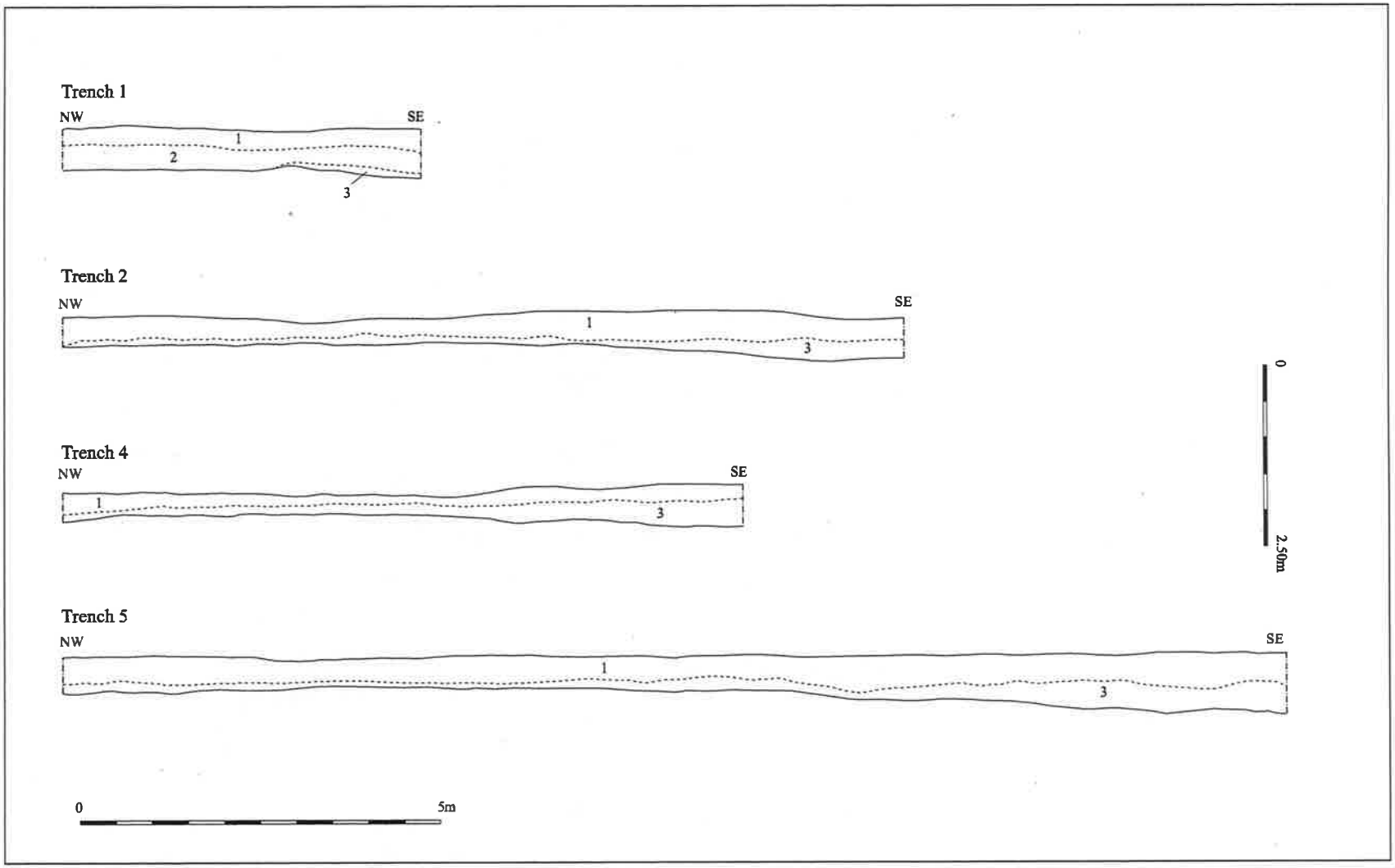

***Figure 2** Trench sections*

The natural geology identified in the trench consisted of Oxford Blue Clay, which appeared to slope down towards Carr Dyke at the south-eastern end of the trench.

No archaeological features or artefacts were recovered from this trench.

5.6 Test Pits

Test Pit 1 was 1.6 wide, 2.2m long and was excavated to a depth of 0.60m. The only layer visible in section was dark grey silt (4), which contained frequent modern brick rubble inclusions.

Test Pit 2 was 1.6 wide, 2.2m long and was excavated to a depth of 0.50m. The only layer visible in section was dark grey silt (4), which contained frequent modern brick rubble inclusions.

Test Pit 3 was 1.6 wide, 2.2m long and was excavated to a depth of 0.58m. The section showed greyish brown re-deposited sandy silty topsoil (1) with a thickness of 0.30m. This in turn sealed greyish brown silty clay mixed with brick rubble quarry infilling with a visible depth of 0.38m.

Test Pit 4 was 1.6 wide, 2.2m long and was excavated to a depth of 0.60m. The only layer visible in section was dark grey silt (4), which contained frequent modern brick rubble inclusions.

Test Pit 5 was 1.6 wide, 2.2m long and was excavated to a depth of 0.30m. The only layer visible in section was dark grey silt (4), which contained frequent modern brick rubble inclusions.

Test Pit 6 was 1.6 wide, 2.2m long and was excavated to a depth of 0.80m. The section showed greyish brown re-deposited sandy silty topsoil (1) with a thickness of 0.60m. This in turn sealed greyish brown silty clay mixed with brick rubble quarry infilling with a visible depth of 0.20m.

6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation identified the depositional sequence in trenches 1, 2, 3 and 5 as being mainly re-deposited (1) topsoil overlying buried topsoil (2), which in turn sealed brown silty clay (3). Each of the trenches also identified the extent of the quarry.

The depositional sequence identified in Trench 4 consisted of re-deposited topsoil overlying brick rubble, which possibly function as foundation material for a road.

Each of the test pits identified re-deposited topsoil overlying rubble associated with the infilling of the quarry.

No archaeological cut features were identified on the site.

7 CONCLUSIONS

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 for the new Kentucky Fried Chicken Restaurant.

The key issue specific to the site relate to its location to the Roman Car Dyke. The absence of archaeological features may be due to extensive ground disturbance occurring during the working life of the quarry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Hepher Dixon who commissioned the archaeological work on behalf of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). Thanks are also due to Stephen Macaulay, who managed the project, Spencer Cooper who worked on-site and Ben Robinson (Peterborough City Council) who monitored the work.

Although no brief was issued prior to the evaluation, this work carried out to the standard required by Peterborough City Council.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Babtie, 2003, *A1073 Spalding to Eye Improvement Scheme Car Dyke: Archaeological Report,* Babtie Group.

Hall, D, 1996. *The Fenland Project, Number 10: Cambridgeshire Survey, Isle of Ely and Wisbech.* East Anglian Report Report No. 79

Hatton, A, 1999. *Eames Garden Centre, Eye Road, Peterborough. An Archaeological Evaluation.* Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit, Report No. B49.

Joynson, R, and Mackinder, T, 2003, *Land Bounded by Paston Parkway and Eye Road, Peterborough. An Archaeological Watching Brief Report.* Museum of London Archaeology Service

Macaulay, S. P, and Reynolds, T, 1994, *Car Dyke: A Roman Canal at Waterbeach.* Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit, Report No. 98.

Macaulay, S. P, 1997, *Akeman Street Roman Road and Romano-British Settlement at Landbeach, Car Dyke.* Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit, Report No. 141.

Peterborough City Council Sites and Monument Record.

Cambridgeshire County Council
Education, Libraries and Heritage

The Archaeological Field Unit
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap
Fulbourn
Cambridge CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 576201
Fax (01223) 880946