



Archaeological trial trench evaluation of the former Red Lion car park Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire January 2014

Planning reference S/2012/1449/FUL

Report No. 14/19

Author: Gemma Hewitt

Illustrator: Amir Bassir



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation
of the former Red Lion car park,
Middleton Cheney.
January 2014**

Planning reference: S/2012/1449/FUL

Report No. 14/19

Quality control and sign off:

Issue No.	Date approved:	Checked by:	Verified by:	Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1		Pat Chapman	Anthony Maull	Andy Chapman	Draft for planning officer
2					

Author: Gemma Hewitt

Illustrator: Amir Bassir

© MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) 2014

MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 700 493
www.mola.org.uk
business@mola.org.uk

STAFF

Project Managers: Anthony Maull Cert Arch
Edmund Taylor BSc

Text: Gemma Hewitt BA

Fieldwork: Yvonne Wolfram-Murray BSc PhD
Tim Sharman BA

Illustrations Amir Bassir BSc

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molanort1-169906	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation of the former Red Lion car park, Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire, January 2014		
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology, (now trading as MOLA), carried out trial trench evaluation in the car park of the former Red Lion public house, Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire. . A beam slot with the timber beam still in situ forms the corner of a small timber building, probably of post-medieval date. No earlier features or finds were present.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Previous work			
Current land use	Car park		
Future work	unknown		
Monument type and period	unknown		
Significant finds	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	High Street, Middleton Cheney		
Easting Northing	SP 4990 4185		
Area (sq m/ha)	0.07ha		
Height aOD	135m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northampton Archaeology now trading as MOLA		
Project brief originator	L Mordue, Assistant planning officer NCC		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Director/Supervisor	Yvonne Wolfram-Murray		
Project Manager	Anthony Maull, Edmund Taylor		
Sponsor or funding body	Cleford Essex Associates		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	07/01/2014		
End date	29/01/2014		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	MCRL13	Pottery	
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation of the former Red Lion car park, Middleton Cheney, January 2014		
Serial title & volume	14/19		
Author(s)	Gemma Hewitt		
Page numbers			
Date	January 2014		

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	BACKGROUND	1
2.1	Location and geology	1
2.2	Historical and archaeological background	4
3	METHODOLOGY	4
4	THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE	6
4.1	General stratigraphy	6
4.2	The trial trenches	6
5	DISCUSSION	10
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	11
	APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF CONTEXTS	

Figures

Front cover: View of car park, looking west

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Trench location

Fig 3: Trench 2, example of stratigraphy, looking north

Fig 4: Beam slot, Trench 1, looking east

Fig 5: Beam slot, Trench 1, looking north-west

Fig 6: Beam slot, Trench 1, plan and section

Fig 7: Trench 2, looking east

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION
OF THE FORMER RED LION CAR PARK
MIDDLETON CHENEY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JANUARY 2014**

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology, (now trading as MOLA), carried out trial trench evaluation in the car park of the former Red Lion public house, Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire. A beam slot with the timber beam still in situ forms the corner of a small timber building, probably of post-medieval date. No earlier features or finds were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (now trading as MOLA) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation in January 2014) at the former Red Lion car park, Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 49900 41855; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Cleford Essex Associates, on behalf of clients, as a condition of the planning application (Ref: S/2012/1449/FUL, Condition 16).

The scope of works was outlined and detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2013). This was written to comply with the requirements set out in the *Brief for a programme of archaeological investigation of land at the former Red Lion car park, High Street, Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire* (Mordue 2013 a and b).

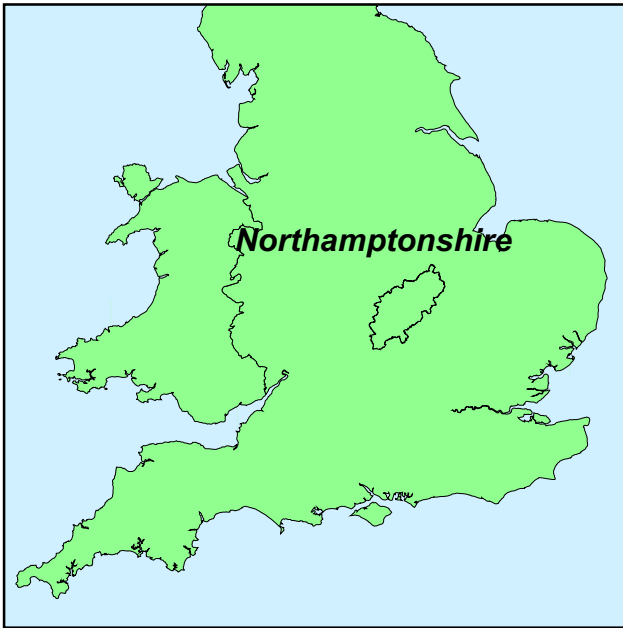
The principal aim of the archaeological evaluation to quantify the quality and extent of the archaeological resource and inform further decisions regarding the suitability of the site for development. This will be achieved through trial trench evaluation.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

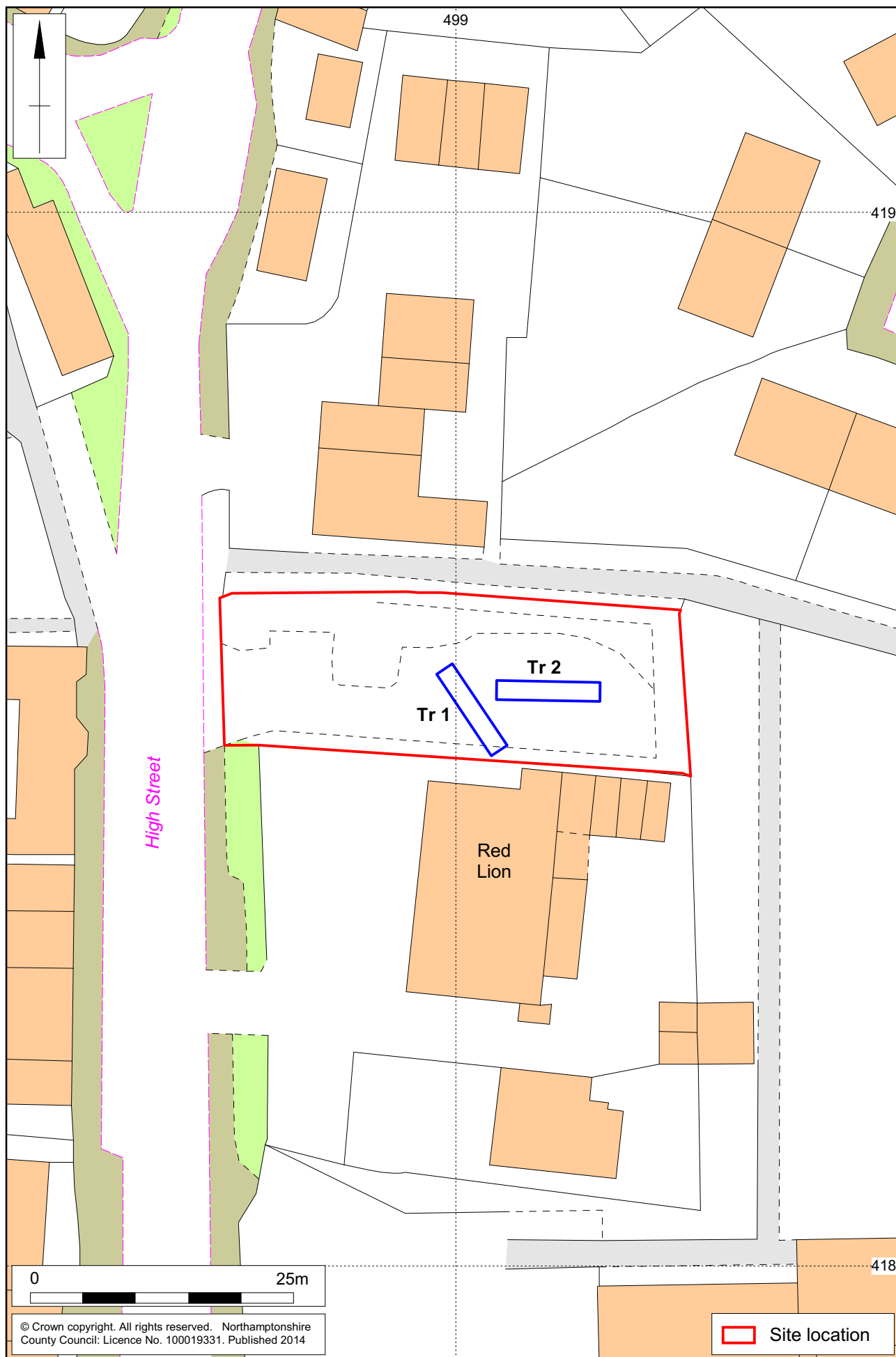
The site comprises an area of land c 0.07ha, situated towards the southern end of High Street in the village of Middleton Cheney. It was previously used as a car park for the adjacent former Red Lion public house which has now been converted to residential use. A single garage, which is to be demolished, currently occupies an area of the site along its northern boundary. The site is bounded to the north and south by commercial and residential properties; the primary school playing fields to the east and High Street to the west.

The local geology comprises ferruginous limestone and iron stone of the Marlestone rock formation (www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex). The site is generally level and lies at approximately 135m aOD.



Scale 1:5,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1: 500

Trench locations Fig 2

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The site is within the historical village (HER6132) and is adjacent to the conservation area of the western side of the high street. Aerial photograph of the area shows a possible prehistoric settlement approximately 500m to the north-west (HER28).

Construction work on the eastern side of the village recovered human remains, possibly dating to the Saxon period; however, mitigation works failed to recover further human remains but located medieval boundary features (NA 2013).

Approximately 600m south-west of the study area is the site of a Civil War skirmish (HER26/1).

3 METHODOLOGY

Two trenches, each 10m long and 1.8m wide, were excavated within the footprint and access areas of the new dwellings (Fig 2). The locations of the trenches were plotted on the ground using Leica 1200 GPS survey equipment and tied into the Ordnance Survey. All site levels were related to Ordnance Datum.

Topsoil, subsoil and non-structural soils or modern overburden were removed under archaeological supervision by mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, down to the surface of significant archaeological remains or the natural substrate. The trenches were cleaned by hand sufficiently to enhance the definition of features and deposits. The topsoil was stacked separately from the subsoil and other deposits to aid reinstatement.

All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of excavation were fully recorded following standard Northamptonshire procedures (NA 2011). All archaeological deposits were given individual context numbers and described on *pro-forma* context sheets, to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. Unstratified modern material was not collected. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned by metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

The surface of features were cleaned by hand to enhance their definition and planned to scale. Profiles through features were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. The depth and complexity of the deposits across the whole site available for trial trenching will be assessed. All drawings include levels related to Ordnance Datum.

Photographs were taken as 35mm monochrome negatives and high resolution (16 megapixel) digital images. A photographic record of vehicle movements and reinstatement was maintained in the event of a claim for damages.

All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 General stratigraphy

The natural cornbrash geology for the area, yellow-brown ironstone, was encountered at 0.72m below the modern ground surface. There was no topsoil or subsoil present. A number of layers (103)(104)(105) all contained modern material such as brick and glass as well as stones and ash. Layer (106) appeared to be a natural interface, while layers (103)(102) were layers of rubble material for the foundation of the tarmac car park surface.

4.2 The trial trenches

The trench locations are shown in Figure 2 and an inventory of contexts is provided in the Appendix. Both trenches had the same stratigraphy.



Trench 2, example of stratigraphy, looking north Fig 3

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned north-west to south-east and was 9.30m long as the trench had to be located and shortened to give the JCB excavator room to manoeuvre.

The corner of a U-shaped beam slot [109] in the south-east end of the trench was angled at 90 degrees (Figs 4-6). In the base of the slot, in fill (108), was a timber *in situ*, as well as nails and slate, sealed by deposit (106). The possible beam extends beyond the trench to the north and east. Some iron nails were discovered which indicate that the structure may have been post-medieval. These were not kept.



Beam slot, Trench 1, looking east

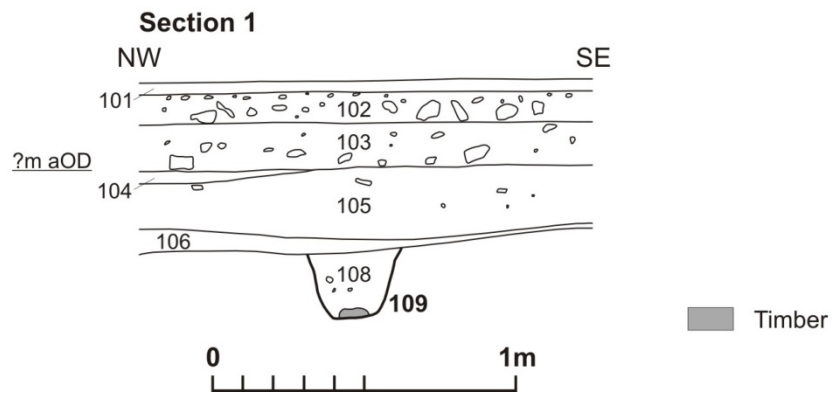
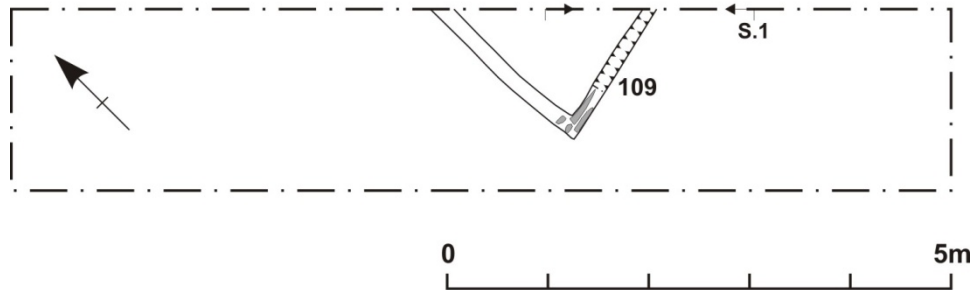
Fig 4



Beam slot, Trench 1, looking north-west

Fig 5

Trench 1



Beam slot, Trench 1, plan and section

Fig 6

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned west-east and was the full 10m in length. No archaeology was present within this trench.



Trench 2, looking east

Fig 6

6 DISCUSSION

The beam slot with surviving timber indicates the presence of a small timber building, possibly of post-medieval date. No archaeological features were found in trench 2 which suggests that the structure did not extend that far north on the east side, but it could extend into the footprint of the proposed new buildings. No earlier features or finds were present.

The site has been heavily truncated and disturbed, however, there is a chance that deeper features survive, as they have in trench 1.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

EH 1991 *Management of archaeological projects*, second edition (MAP2), English Heritage

EH 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers Guide*, English Heritage

IfA 2001 (revised 2008) *Standards and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Institute for Archaeologists

IfA 2010 *Code of Conduct*, Institute for Archaeologists

Mordue, E, 2013a *Brief for a programme of archaeological investigation of land at the former Red Lion car park, High Street, Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire County Council

Mordue, E, 2013b *Brief for the archaeological evaluation of land at the former Red Lion car park, High Street, Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire County Council

NA 2011 *Archaeological fieldwork manual*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

NA 2013 *An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation On Land At The Former Red Lion Car Park, High Street Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire, Written Scheme Of Investigation*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

Walker, K, 1990 *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage*, United Kingdom Institute for Conservation

Watkinson, D, 1998 *First Aid for Finds* (2nd edition), United Kingdom Institute for Conservation

Websites

BGS 2013 <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html> British Geological Survey website

Landis 2013 <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/> Cranfield Universtiy National Soil Resources Institute

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INDEX

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	9.30mx1.80m NW-SE	SP 4990 41855		
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Tarmac	Tarmac layer with grey base	0.04m thick	-
102	layer	Grey rubble sub-base, med limestone rubble	0.10m thick	-
103	layer	Base layer, large bricks and flag stone	0.15m thick	-
104	layer	Dark grey, ash	0.10m thick	-
105	layer	Dark yellowish-brown, sandy clay with some ash and rubble	0.30m thick	-
106	layer	Yellow-brown disturbed natural with large ironstone fragments	0.20m thick	-
107	natural	Yellow-brown ironstone 'cornbrash'	-	-
108	fill	Mid orange-grey, sandy clay with frequent wood, nails and slate	0.25m	-
109	cut	U-shaped beam slot with an uneven base, possible beam still present	0.25m	-

MIDDLETON CHENEY RED LION CAR PARK

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	9.30mx1.80m NW-SE	SP 4990 41855		
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Tarmac	Tarmac layer with grey base	0.04m thick	-
202	layer	Grey rubble sub-base, med limestone rubble	0.10m thick	-
203	layer	Base layer, large bricks and flagstone	0.15m thick	-
204	layer	Dark grey, ash	0.10m thick	-
205	layer	Dark yellowish-brown, sandy clay with some ash and rubble	0.30m thick	-
206	layer	Yellow-brown disturbed natural with large ironstone fragments	0.20m thick	-
207	natural	Yellow-brown ironstone 'cornbrash'	-	-



MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 700 493
www.mola.org.uk
business@mola.org.uk