An archaeological trial trench evaluation on land off Park Lane, Castle Donington Leicestershire August-September 2014

X.A112.2014

Report No. 14/189

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Illustrator: Amir Bassir

Project Manager: Anthony Maull
Site Code: X.A112.2014
NGR: SK 435 268

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	**Oasis No. molanort-192078**	
Project title	An archaeological trial trench evaluation on land off Park Lane, Castle Donington, Leicestershire, August-September 2014	
Abstract	An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by MOLA Northampton on land off Park Lane Castle Donington, Leicestershire during August and September 2014. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered during the course of the evaluation.	
Project type	Trial trench evaluation	
Site Status	None	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment, Geophysical survey,	
Current land use	Arable/woodland	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	Land off Park Lane, Castle Donington	
Post code		
OS co-ordinates	SK 435 268	
Area (sq m/ha)	76ha	
Height aOD	70-50 aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton	
Project brief originator	Leicestershire	
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull	
Project supervisor	Edmund Taylor	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting for Miller Homes	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	August 2014	
End date	September 2014	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Contents**
Physical	X.A112.2014	None
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)
Digital		Client report PDF; digital images
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
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Abstract

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1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA Northampton on land off Park Lane, Castle Donington, Leicestershire during August and September (NGR SK 435 268, Fig 1). The evaluation forms the first part of a wider programme of archaeological works comprising further trial trenching and open area excavations.

The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of their clients Miller Homes, and followed an approved Specificaton prepared by CgMs Consulting (Clark and Flitcroft 2014). The work was carried out in response to advice from Leicestershire County Council's Principal Planning Archaeologist to North West Leicestershire District Council that since the application site lies within an area of archaeological interest and in line with National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012), an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation should be conditional in any planning permission that might be granted.

The evaluation adhered to the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2009) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

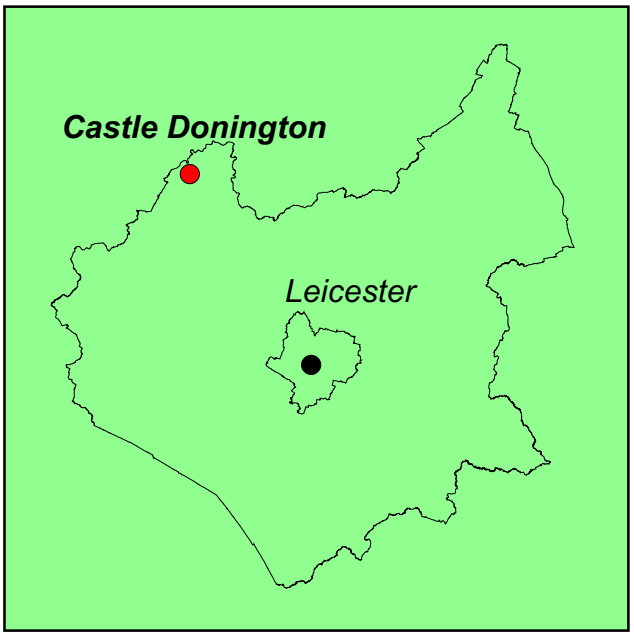
2 BACKGROUND

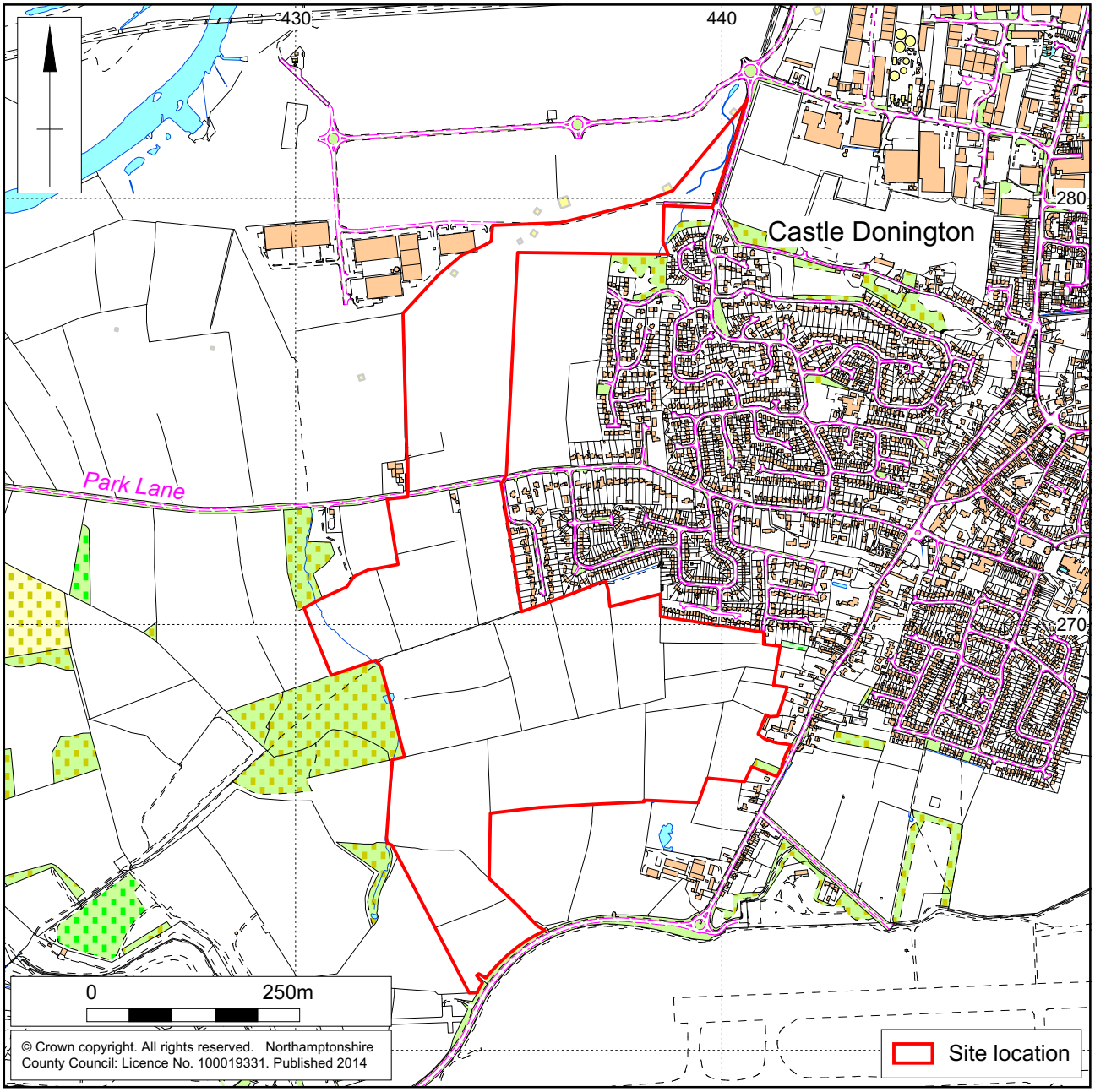
2.1 Location, topography and geology

The current evaluation area comprises two parcels of land, covering 21.2ha, to the south and north of Park Lane. The southern area, 3.4ha, is surrounded by arable fields on all sides and a small wooded area at the north-west corner. Stud Brook bisects the area from north-west to south-east.

The northern area of 17.8ha is bounded to the south by Park Lane and to the north by East Midland Distribution Centre. Ground cover comprises dense, recently planted woodland with some open areas and more mature woodland in the extreme north of the area.

The underlying geology comprises Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation and the ground slopes from 70m aOD in the south to 50m aOD in the north.





Scale 1:15,000

Site Location Fig 1

2.2 Archaeological background

An Environmental Statement submitted with the planning application in 2009, with an addendum in 2012, assessed the archaeological potential of the development area. A desk-based assessment formed the initial reference (CgMs Consulting 2009) which included consideration of evaluation trenching undertaken on the northern part of the site in 2003 and 2010 by ULAS (Coward 2003 and 2010), and a built heritage report. A geophysical survey by ArchaeoPhysica (project numbers PCD091 & PCD101) and evaluation trenching in the southern part of the site undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Flavell 2010) provided additional information included in the 2012 addendum.

Prehistoric

Late Neolithic to early Bronze Age activity was identified in 2003 by trial trench evaluation in the northern part of the site. Neolithic flintwork and early Bronze Age pottery, including a Beaker, were associated with gullies, ditches, pits and postholes. An archaeological investigation to the east of the development identified a ring ditch of a possible Bronze Age round barrow and two Bronze Age collared urn burials. South of the development area further Neolithic flints and Bronze Age pottery were discovered, associated with pits, postholes and ditches.

Iron Age

The 2003 and 2010 evaluations by ULAS to the north of Park Lane identified Iron Age features. These included ditches and gullies, pits and a posthole and 209 sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered, 142 being from the same vessel. A pit alignment to east extends west towards the development area. Other Iron Age activity has been identified 600m north of the site where a length of a pit alignment has been noted. An Iron Age pit and gullies were found south of Park Lane in the 2010 evaluation by NA.

Roman

To the north, the fieldwork recorded a network of ditched Roman enclosures and a Roman ditch was recorded in the south. A coin find of Constantine I in Castle Donington is the only other evidence of Roman activity in the area.

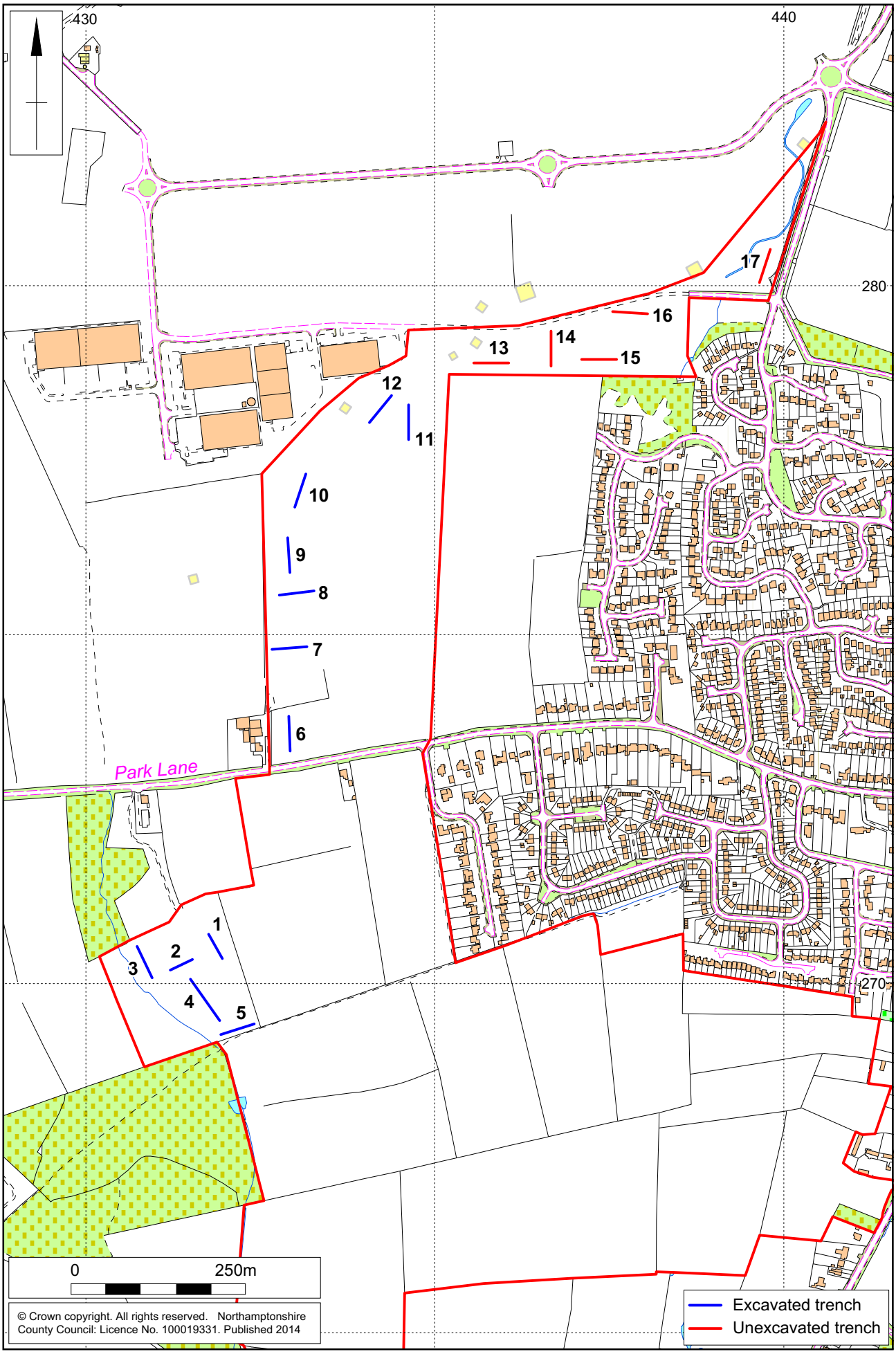
Anglo-Saxon

Anglo-Saxon activity was identified by the ULAS evaluations. This included pits and ditches associated with a quantity of pottery. North-east of the development, at Willow Farm, two Anglo-Saxon halls and a sunken-featured building have been excavated.

Medieval

The earthwork remains of the castle at Castle Donington are located about 1km east of the development site (SAM 17096). The land was inherited in 1133 by Eustace FitzJohn who built the castle. The castle is located on a ridge overlooking a crossing point on the River Trent. The castle was demolished in 1216 under orders of King John, but later references suggest it was restored.

The medieval and post-medieval historic core of the village have been deduced to abut the eastern edge of the development area, but to not fall within it.



Scale 1: 7,500

Trench locations Fig 2

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main aims of the evaluation were:

- to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any archaeological remains within the site;
- to assess the artefactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits present;
- to inform the formulation of a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of development on surviving archaeological remains.

Site specific objectives relating to the results of previous archaeological works are outlined in the Specification (Clark and Flitcroft 2014).

The evaluation comprised 17 trenches; fifteen trenches were 50m long and two trenches were 30m long. Of these 12 were located to the north of Park Lane in the area of the bypass road corridor and five were located to the south of Park Lane in an area of proposed balancing ponds.

Mature woodland in the northern part of the development area meant that Trenches 13-17 could not be excavated during this tranche of works. It is anticipated these will be excavated once the line of the road corridor has been stripped of vegetation.

Following discussions with CgMs Consulting and Leicestershire County Council's Principal Archaeologist, Trench 1 was moved approximately 14m to the south of the agreed position to avoid overhead services. Trench 4 was moved from the south-west corner of the site to the south of Trench 2 as there was no access across the brook.

The trenches were positioned using a Leica Viva GPS and were excavated, under continuous archaeological supervision, using 180° wheeled and 360° tracked mechanical excavators fitted with flat toothless ditching buckets. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately and adjacent to the trenches. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the top of the archaeological deposits or to the natural substrate where no archaeology was encountered.

Archaeological excavation and recording followed the guidelines outlined in MOLA's *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (2014). Trenches containing possible archaeological remains were cleaned by hand, sufficient enough to define the features. Each feature or deposit was given a unique number consisting of the trench number and an individual context number (eg 402, Trench 4, context 2). The details of each context were recorded on pro-forma sheets. Levels, which were related to Ordnance Datum, were taken on the trenches at appropriate points, and on section datums. Trench locations were related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record was made of the excavation, using 35mm black and white negative film and digital images.

The spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC 1992).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The natural substrate was encountered between 0.30m and 1.20m below current ground level. It comprised dark reddish-brown silty clay with pale green silty clay mottling and patches of loose sandstone fragments. In Trenches 3 and 5 this was overlain by a colluvial or alluvial deposit, 0.40m-0.50m thick, which comprised mid reddish-brown silty clay with occasional small sandstone fragments. The subsoil comprised a mid orange-brown silty clay 0.10m-0.90m thick which was overlain by dark grey-brown silty loam topsoil, 0.10m-0.30m (Fig 3).

Modern disturbance was noted in Trench 12 where crushed concrete was mixed with the top surface of the natural substrate. At the northern end of the trench there were four linear features, around 0.30m wide, aligned north-east to south-west. These probable modern wheel ruts were filled with dark grey topsoil-like material and fragments of crushed tarmac.

No archaeological deposits or artefacts were observed during the evaluation

The stratigraphic sequence in Trenches 3 and 12 Fig 3

Trench 6, looking north Fig 4

Trench 11, looking south Fig 5

5 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological artefacts or deposits were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

Deeper soils in Trenches 3 and 5 are likely to be colluvial or alluvial in nature given the locations of the trenches towards the bottom of a natural slope and close to Stud Brook.

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