
Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief

on land at DIRFT Central

Northamptonshire

March – May 2005



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Report 05/086

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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Verified by	Andy Mudd		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological watching brief on land at DIRFT Central, near Crick, Northamptonshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of a new distribution facility and associated groundworks. The works were undertaken following a project design for archaeological mitigation. The groundworks comprised the building up of an area of low ground to formation level with the remainder of groundworks for the construction of the new distribution centre undertaken in ground made up prior to this application. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Watching Brief	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	None	
Current Land use	Open land within an industrial development	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/ period		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address (including postcode)	DIRFT Central, near Crick, Northamptonshire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	c. 18 hectares	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. numbers)	4567 2735	
Height OD	103m OD (Original ground) 104.5m-108.5m (Area of made up ground)	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	The Planning Archaeologist, Northamptonshire County Council Historic Environment Team	
Project Design originator	RPS Planning and Transport & Environment	
Director/Supervisor	David J. Leigh	
Project Manager	Andy Chapman	
Sponsor or funding body	RPS Planning Transport & Environment	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	February 2005	
End date	May 2005	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		None
Paper		Watching brief forms (8) Colour slides (29) black and white contact prints (21) Digital photographs (15)
Digital		Report text, figures and plates

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON LAND
AT DIRFT CENTRAL, NEAR CRICK, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FEBRUARY - MAY 2005**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during groundworks connected with the construction of a new distribution centre at DIRFT Central, near Crick, Northamptonshire. The groundworks followed a project design produced by RPS in order to mitigate the effects of the new development on any archaeological deposits that may be present in the development area. The groundworks comprised the building up of an area of low lying original ground surface, followed by the excavation of foundations and service trenches for the construction of the new distribution centre. The watching brief showed that groundworks were contained within the made ground and did not impact upon archaeological remains or the natural stratum. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between February and May 2005 during groundworks associated with the construction of a new distribution centre on land at DIRFT Central, Crick, Northamptonshire (Planning application No: DA/2004/1171; NGR SP 567 735: Fig 1; Plate 1). The work was carried out to mitigate possible adverse impacts of construction activities on archaeological remains surviving in the development site. It was carried out on behalf of RPS Planning Transport and Environment acting for Rosemound Developments Limited and followed a project design for archaeological mitigation agreed with The Senior Planning Archaeologist, The Heritage Team Northamptonshire County Council.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography

The development area is located to the west of the A5-M1 link road, Kilsby and covers c.18 hectare of land. The majority of the development area encompasses ground made-up relatively recently lying at a height of 104.5m OD in the north which increases to 108.5m OD in the south. The made ground comprises a stone sub-base sealed with clay capping which is 2m to 2.6m deep in the north, 2.5m to 3.4 in the centre and 0.5m to 2.4m in the south. In the western half of the site, at a height of 103m OD, is located an area of low lying original ground surface (Fig 2; Plate 2). Up to the present application the site has remained undeveloped with a covering of light vegetation with occasional mounds of construction rubbish. The underlying geology comprises Lower Lias clays, silts, mudstones and limestones of the Jurassic overlain by

superficial deposits of glacial sand and gravel, and alluvium (British Survey Sheet 185, Northampton).

2.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

The development area is located in an area of archaeological interest. The site is bounded to the east by the Roman Watling Street. Previous archaeological work within the development area has comprised excavations on the DIRFT East site (BUFAU 1998) and the DIRFT West site (RPS 2001) which revealed evidence of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age ritual and monumental activity, along with Iron Age settlement. Excavations carried out on the DIRFT Central site have revealed evidence for settlement of Middle and Late Iron Age date (Chapman 1994).

Preserved archaeological remains in the development site may survive below the base of the protecting overburden provided by the made ground associated with the earlier DIRFT development and remnants of original plough soils of the pre-DIRFT development era.

2.3 Development Details

The development consists of the construction of a distribution centre with associated service areas, car parks and landscaping work accessed from the existing A428. Ground disturbance works during construction activities included a fill component on the west of the site, a cut component that involved removing the existing earthwork platforms on the south of the site and the excavation of service trenches. Those associated with the cut component and the excavation of the service trenches had a potential to extend below the base of the protecting overburden and adversely impact archaeological remains.

2.4 Planning Context

A framework is provided within legislation, guidance and policy that aim to provide statutory protection to designated sites and advice concerning archaeology and the historic environment within the planning process. Statutory protection for archaeology is principally enshrined in the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act* (1979) amended by the *National Heritage Act* (1983) and the *National Heritage Act* (2002). Nationally important sites are listed in a schedule of Monuments and are accorded statutory protection. *PPG16: Archaeology and Planning* (1990) provides advice concerning the safeguarding of archaeology within the planning process. It recognises that archaeological remains are an irreplaceable and finite resource that should be preserved in their settings. In situations where preservation *in-situ* is not justified the developer is to make provision for appropriate excavation and recording of archaeological remains.

As the development site has a high potential for preserved archaeological remains that may be adversely impacted by construction activities, a condition was attached to Daventry District Council's planning consent. This condition states:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.

In response to this condition a project design for archaeological mitigation comprising supervision and recording works was produced that outlined the nature of the archaeological investigations and methodologies employed for the archaeological work (RPS, 2005).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Observe the building up to formation level of the ground level across the area of original low lying ground, and groundworks for the construction of the new distribution centre and associated service trenches, and to record all archaeological deposits uncovered.
- ◆ Determine the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits observed and to retrieve all datable artefacts.

The fieldwork comprised visits to the site during the building up of the low lying original ground surface in the western half of the site, and the excavation of foundations for the new distribution centre along with associated service trenches. The groundworks were carried out using 360° tracked excavators fitted with a combination of toothed and toothless buckets. A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, along with supplementary digital photographs. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the standards and guidelines for an archaeological watching brief (IFA 1999).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

4.1 The built up area (Fig 2)

A low lying area of original ground surface was present in the western half of the site (Plate 2). Work in this area comprised the laying of a main drain and the importation of clay to raise the area to formation level.

A light machine scrape was undertaken across the area to remove vegetation, following which the drain, comprising concrete rings was laid on a clay bed set on top of the original ground surface (Plate 3). This along with the remainder of the low lying area was systematically sealed beneath a layer of compact clay to formation level. No intrusive groundworks were undertaken in this area, and any archaeological deposits that may be present remain undisturbed.

4.2 The distribution centre (Fig 2)

Following the raising of the low lying ground to formation height the foundations for the new distribution centre were excavated. These comprised foundation pits and beam trenches upon which the structure sits. Observation of the excavation of foundations and service trenches revealed that none exceeded 2m in depth, and consequently did not extend below the made up ground into the potential archaeological level and natural substratum. This remained the case in the southern end of the site where there was concern that groundworks may have impinged upon undisturbed stratum.

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The site archive comprises:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	8
Colour slides	29
Black and white contacts and negatives	21
Digital photographs	15

6 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological deposits were observed during the watching brief and no artefacts were recovered. The results of the watching brief are largely a result of the mitigation strategy put in place prior to the start of the project in order to minimise the effects of the development on any archaeological deposits present. The development has had no adverse impacts on archaeological remains. The watching brief was carried out in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable. It is concluded that the data recovered by the watching brief has no potential for further study.

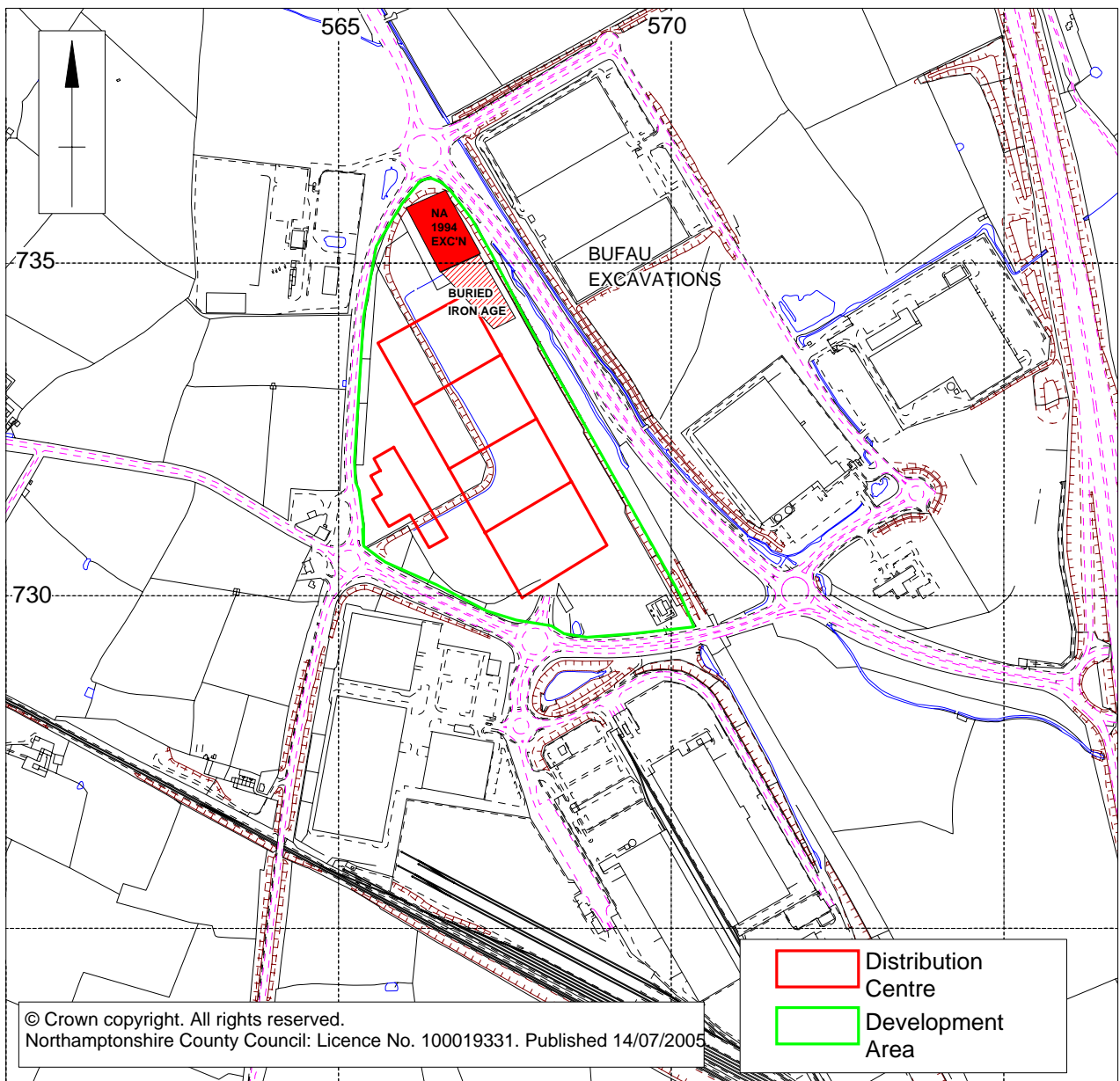
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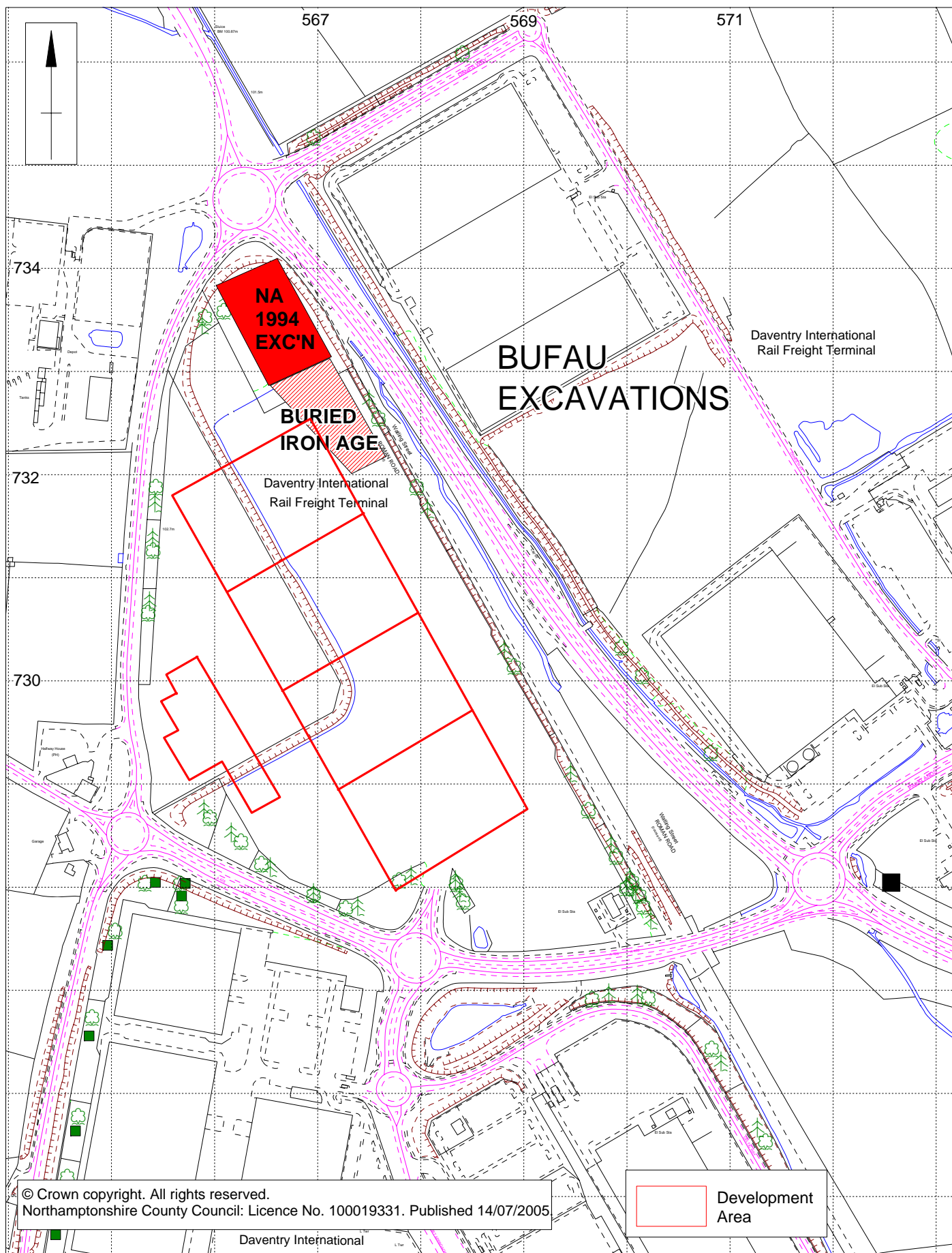
BUFAU 1998 *The excavation of an Iron Age settlement at Covert Farm (DIRFT East), Crick, Northamptonshire* Client report

Chapman A 1994 *Excavation of Iron Age and Roman sites at the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal near Crick, Northamptonshire* Northamptonshire Heritage interim report

IFA 1999 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* Institute of Field Archaeologists

RPS 2005 *Project design for archaeological mitigation comprising supervision and recording works* RPS Planning Transport & Environment report





Scale 1:5000

Fig. 2



Plate 1: The development area at the start of groundworks, viewed from the south



Plate 2: The low lying area of original ground surface, in the western half of the site



Plate 3: The new drain laid above the original ground surface, prior to backfilling



Plate 4: The new distribution centre during construction, viewed from the north