

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological evaluation
of land at White Cottage,
Leckhampstead, Buckinghamshire



Leon Field

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Report 06/179

Northamptonshire Archaeology

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QUALITY CONTROL

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Approved by	A. Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Archaeological evaluation of land at White Cottage, Leckhampstead, Buckinghamshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	In December 2006 Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at White Cottage, Leckhampstead, Buckinghamshire. Three evaluation trenches, totalling thirty metres in length were excavated across a former house plot. There were no finds or features, so there is no evidence of any significant activity at the site prior to the modern period.	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Trial trenching	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	Test pit, Whittlewood Project. University of Leicester	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Development of land	
Monument type And period		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Buckinghamshire	
Site address (including postcode)	White Cottage, Leckhampstead, Buckinghamshire	
Easting (use numerical 100km grid square no.)	727	
Northing	377	
Height OD	97.05m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	D Radford, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services	
Project Design originator	Joe Prentice, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Leon Field	
Project Manager	Joe Prentice	
Sponsor or funding body	Mr and Mrs K Sims	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	11 th December 2006	
End date	12 th December 2006	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	2006.216	
Paper		
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title		
Serial title & volume	06/179	
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF
LAND AT WHITE COTTAGE, LECKHAMPSTEAD
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
DECEMBER 2006**

ABSTRACT

In December 2006 Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at White Cottage, Leckhampstead, Buckinghamshire. Three evaluation trenches, totalling thirty metres in length were excavated across a former house plot. There were no finds or features, so there is no evidence of any significant activity at the site prior to the modern period.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology in December 2006 on land at White Cottage, Leckhampstead, Buckinghamshire (Fig 1; NGR SP 7276 3773). The work was undertaken for the owners of the land, Mr and Mrs K Sims, as part of planning application 06/2602.

The evaluation was in advance of proposed development of a replacement house and garage and was designed to meet the requirements of a project design issued by Northampton Archaeology (Prentice 2006), in response to a brief issued by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (CAS).

2 BACKGROUND

Topography and geology

The site comprises the disused area of a demolished house and its surroundings, measuring approximately 55m by 30m, with a slight slope to the north. It is enclosed by Middle End to the south and a public footpath to the west. To the north and east are open fields (Fig 2).

The site is located on the edge of Great Oolite and cornbrash limestone (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm>) at 97m AOD.

Archaeological background

The evaluation was requested due to the site lying in the vicinity of Middle End, one of the dispersed medieval settlement cores of Leckhampstead village. There was believed to be Saxon,

medieval and post-medieval archaeological potential.

Leckhampstead itself lies within the area covered by the University of Leicester's "Whittlewood project". This project aims to research the origins of dispersed settlement patterns in the area. Earthworks were recorded relating to the shrunken medieval village at Middle End (CASO54002000) and a fieldwalking project was also undertaken which yielded medieval pottery in the area surrounding the site. Medieval pottery was also recovered from test pits excavated in the area of Leckhampstead during the summer of 2002 (www.le.ac.uk/elh/whittlewood/index.htm). Test pit 39 was situated in the plot of White Cottage (Fig 2) and, even though the deposit was greatly disturbed, a total of 217 sherds of medieval pottery were discovered, and this was thought to indicate that the plot was occupied during that period.

Northamptonshire Archaeology recently carried out a strip and record excavation on a nearby plot at Middle End, which found an early post-medieval pit and pond with finds and pottery dating from the 14th and 15-16th centuries (Upson-Smith 2006).

Other sites known within a 1km area of the site include the site of a former manor house and moat-known as the Toy- relating to the shrunken village, the church of St Mary and probable Civil War battery earthworks.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation were as set out in the project design (Prentice 2006):

- Gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, date, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains within the area of study.
- Establish the presence/absence of Saxon/medieval/post-medieval occupation on the site and, if, present, determine the date and character of that occupation with particular reference to the origins of the settlement in Middle End.
- Seek to determine the level of truncation of buried deposits, the level of preservation of deposits within negative features and site formation processes.
- Establish the environmental potential of the site.

Methodology

The evaluation comprised three trenches. Each was 1.6m wide and trenches 1-3 were 10m, 15m and 5m long respectively. The removal of the topsoil and other overburden was carried out by a JCB mechanical excavator, fitted with a 1.60m-wide toothless ditching bucket, operating under direct archaeological supervision. In all trenches mechanical excavation proceeded as far as the natural substrate or the first significant archaeological horizons.

Standard Northamptonshire Archaeology recording procedures were employed (NA 2003). All works were conducted in accordance with *IFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (1994, revised 2001) and the *Code of Conduct* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1985, revised 2000). All work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Project Design (Prentice 2006)

4 RESULTS

General stratigraphic sequence

Throughout the area the natural geology comprised a light brown clay with occasional chalk inclusions. Subsoil only survived in trench 2; trenches 1 and 3 had topsoil directly lying over the natural geology.

No archaeology or clues to habitation were found pre-dating the modern or post-medieval period.

Trench 1

Only the modern building remains of the demolished White Cottage were found in trench 1 and these were seen at a maximum depth of 0.42m. The natural geology lay at an average depth of 0.19m, overlain directly by topsoil mixed with rubble.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was laid out joining trench 1 to form a T-shape. The modern building remains extended 2.10m from the southern end of the trench and were seen to a maximum depth of 0.59m. The natural geology lay at an average depth of 0.68m below the ground level and overlying this was a subsoil layer, found 0.29m below the ground level. The topsoil layer contained post-medieval artefacts such as glass bottles and painted metal lengths. These finds have now been discarded.

Trench 3

No archaeology was found in trench 3. The natural geology lay at an average depth of 0.34m with the topsoil directly overlying it.

5 DISCUSSION

The evaluation failed to find any archaeology or evidence for habitation for the site prior to the post-medieval to modern period. No evidence was seen in the trial trenches or on site for any Saxon or medieval activity. These findings are contrary to the findings of test pit 39 of the Whittlewood project located in the White Cottage plot, which produced a concentration of medieval pottery sherds. These findings were remarked upon in the Whittlewood projects discussion as they are in contrast to the evidence found in the surrounding pits, (pits 1-5), which indicated that occupation was mainly limited to the southern side of the road. It was therefore theorised that White Cottage represented the easternmost extension of the medieval end north of the road.

The findings of the present evaluation certainly support the general conclusion that this area lies at the northern most extent of the Middle End of Leckhampstead, and probably beyond the occupied part of the settlement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

IFA 1985 (revised 2000) *Code of Conduct*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

IFA 1994 (revised 2001) *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

Whittlewood Project web Site: www.le.ac.uk/elh/whittlewood/index.htm

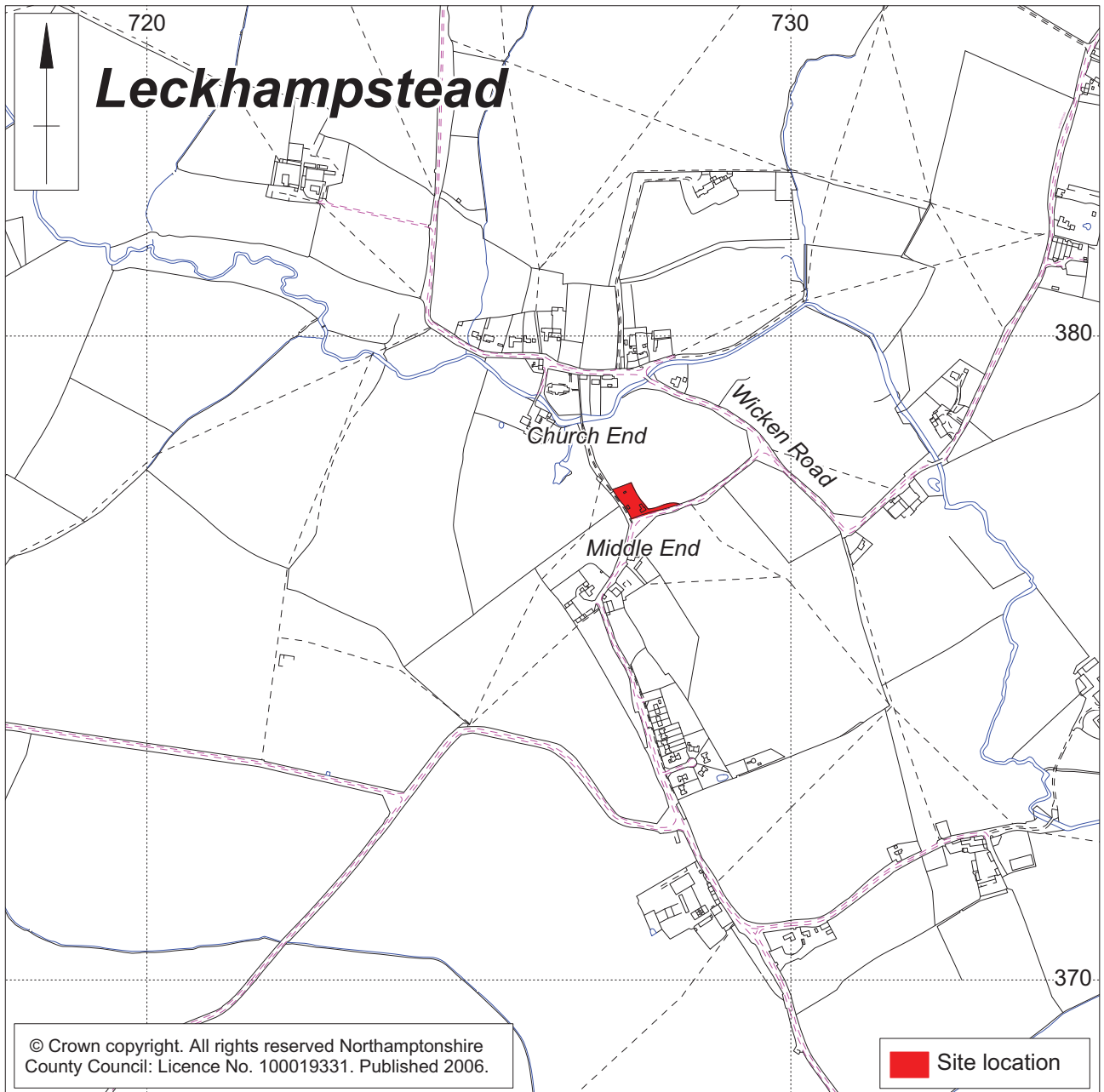
NA 2003 *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

Prentice, J, 2006 *A Specification For Trial Trenching At The White Cottage, Middle End, Leckhampstead, Buckinghamshire* Northamptonshire Archaeology

Upson-Smith, T 2006. *Archaeological Strip and Record on Land at Middle End Barn, Middle End, Leckhampstead* Northamptonshire Archaeology Report 06/136

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

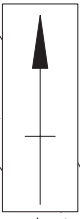
Context number	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth
101	Demolition layer	Black silt with modern rubble inclusions			0.19
102	Natural	Light brown clay			
201	Topsoil	Dark brown soil layer			0.29
202	Subsoil	Light brown soil layer			0.42
203	Rubble layer	Black silt build up with modern building remains	2.10		0.59
204	Natural	Light brown clay			
301	Topsoil	Dark brown soil layer			0.34
302	Natural	Light brown clay			



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

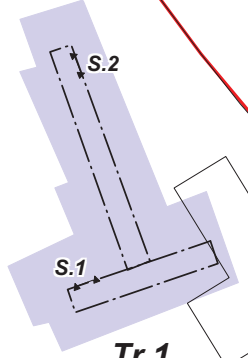
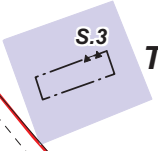
Scale 1:500



**Testpit 39
(2002)**





Tr 2

Tr 3



Tr 1

Middle End

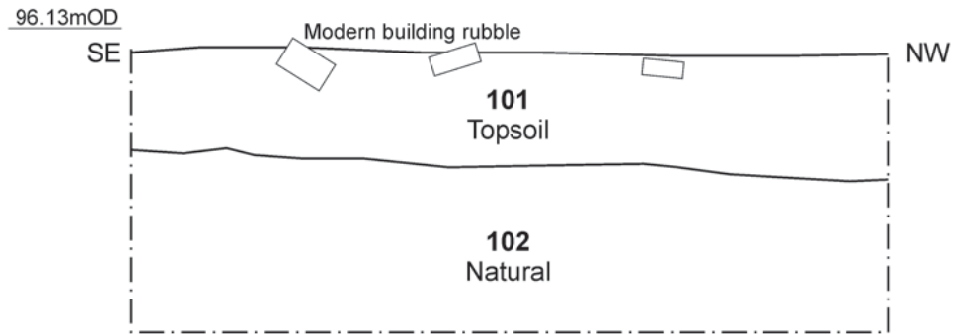
-  Site boundary
-  Trench location
-  New buildings
-  Demolished buildings

Trench location Fig 2

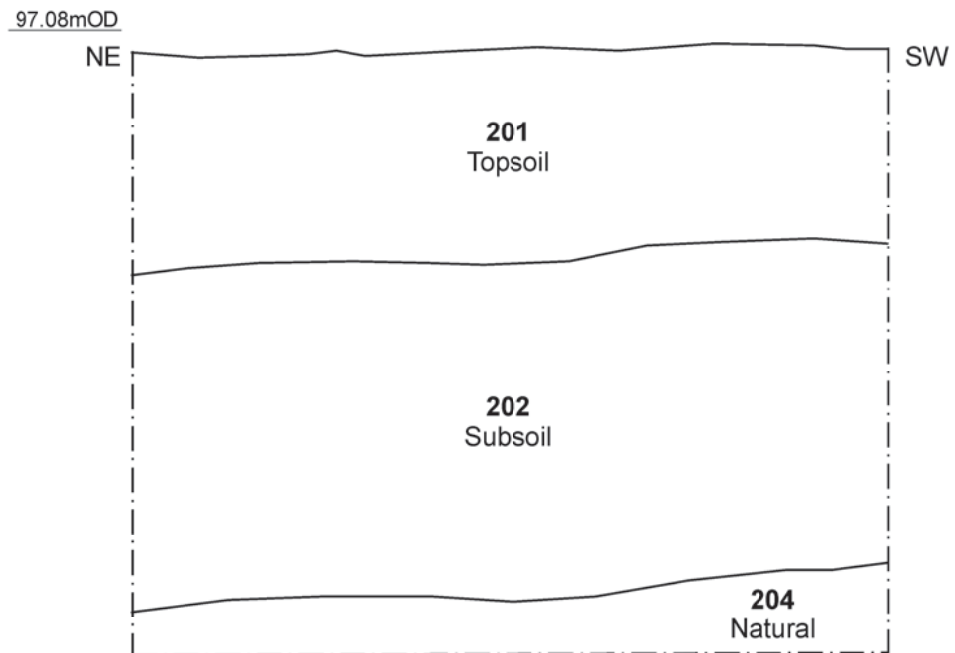
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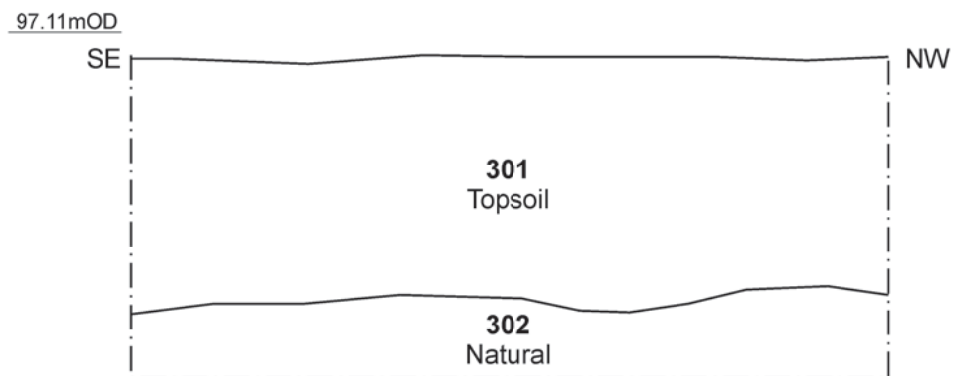
Section 1 - Trench 1



Section 2 - Trench 2



Section 3 - Trench 3



Sections 1-3 Fig 3



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking east.



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking south.



Plate 3: Trench 3, looking west.