Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological evaluation for the
Boddington Gardens Flood Alleviation Scheme
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire
December 2009

BEDFM 2009.79

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Report 09/190

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OASIS **REPORT FORM**

PROJECT NAME	An archaeological evaluation for the Boddington Gardens Flood Alleviation Scheme, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire	
Details	The evaluation was carried out prior to the construction of a sewer that will form part of the Boddington Gardens Flood Alleviation Scheme. In the area designated for the site compound, two early to middle Iron Age pits were identified. The pits contained sherds of hand-built Iron Age pottery from a variety of vessels, a small stone bead and a small assemblage of animal bone and charred cereal grain. No archaeological remains were encountered in the trenches positioned on the route of the proposed pipeline.	
Project type	Evaluation	
Site status	-	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Set-aside and arable farmland	
Future work	Excavation	
Monument type/ period	Early to middle Iron Age pits	
Significant finds	Early to middle Iron Age pottery, stone bead	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Bedfordshire	
Site address	Furzenhall Road, Biggleswade	
Evaluation area	0.95ha	
OS Easting & Northing	51664 24570	
Height aOD	30m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists	
Project design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/supervisor	Mark Patenall (NA)	
Project manager	Simon Carlyle (NA)	
Sponsor or funding body	Anglian Water	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	30th November 2009	
End date	2nd December2009	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content
Physical	Bedford Museum Accession no. BEDFM2009.79	Pottery and animal bone (1 box)
Paper		1 archive box of site documents
Digital		1 CD Digital Photographs, report, DXF Data
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION FOR THE BODDINGTON GARDENS FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME BIGGLESWADE, BEDFORDSHIRE DECEMBER 2009

BEDFM 2009.79

Abstract

In December 2009, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on the northern outskirts of Biggleswade, Bedfordshire. The evaluation was carried out prior to the construction of a sewer that will form part of the Boddington Gardens Flood Alleviation Scheme. In the area designated for the site compound, two early to middle Iron Age pits were identified. The pits contained sherds of hand-built Iron Age pottery from a variety of vessels, a small stone bead and a small assemblage of animal bone and charred cereal grain. No archaeological remains were encountered in the trenches positioned on the route of the proposed pipeline.

1 INTRODUCTION

In December 2009, Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation along the proposed route of a new sewer, to be built on the northern outskirts of Biggleswade, Bedfordshire (site centred on NGR: TL 1964 4570; Fig 1). The sewer is being constructed by Anglian Water Services (AWS) as part of a flood alleviation scheme to serve the area around Boddington Gardens, in the north-west corner of the town.

The route of the sewer passes through an area that is known to contain archaeological remains of prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date. As there is the potential for archaeological remains to extend into the easement for the sewer and associated compound area, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists (CBCA) advised AWS that an archaeological trial trench evaluation should be carried out, in compliance with Anglian Water's *Code of Practice* and in line with the guidance outlined in *PPG16 Archaeology and Planning*. A brief for the proposed evaluation, outlining the scope of works and professional requirements, was issued by CBCA on 28th August 2009.

The project objectives, as outlined in the brief (CBCA 2009), were to determine the location, extent, character, date, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the development, in order to identify the need for any further mitigation measures.

This report, which has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in English Heritage's procedural documents *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (1991) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (EH 2006), details the results of the trial trench evaluation.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

The site lies on the northern edge of Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, approximately 1km north-east of the town centre (Fig 1). The route of the pipeline runs along the southern edge of an arable field, bordering a modern housing estate to the south. It extends from the vicinity of Nursery Close in the east to the rear of Mountbatten Drive in the west, a distance of *c* 265m. An associated compound and access road will be set up adjacent to Furzenhall Road, to the west of the sewer easement.

Topographically, the site lies on a low-relief spur, at approximately 30m aOD, near the confluence of the River Ivel and one of its tributaries. The underlying rocks are Lower Cretaceous and belong to the Lower Greensand Group (BGS 1996). They are overlain by deposits of fluvial sand and gravel. The soils belong to the Sutton 1 (571u) Soil Association, comprising well drained, locally calcareous fine and coarse loamy soils (SSEW 1983).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A visit was made to the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) office, on 24th November 2009, to gather relevant information relating to archaeological sites in the surrounding area. The study area extended up to 1.5km from the site and identified sites of prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date (Fig 2). There was no record of sites within the area of the proposed sewer easement and compound.

Some of the earliest remains lie *c* 0.8km to the north of the site and include a Neolithic cursus that extends westwards, towards the River Ivel, for a distance of at least *c* 750m (644). The western end of the cursus was investigated prior to construction work adjacent to the sewage treatment plant at Furzenhall Farm (10138; Albion 2004); in addition to the cursus, a ring ditch and several small rectilinear enclosures were excavated in this area. Cropmarks show a cluster of probable Bronze Age ring ditches at the eastern end of the cursus (Field 1974, 71; Albion 2004), and to the north and east of the sewage works, to the north of the cursus, are further cropmarks marking the site of probable prehistoric activity (13928).

To the south of the cursus, approximately 0.5km to the north of the site, there are a number of cropmarks which are probably also of prehistoric date. These include: a possible pit alignment crossed by a rectangular enclosure (15101); a

D-shaped enclosure and two smaller sub-rectangular enclosures (15709); and an indistinct cropmark of a possible rectangular enclosure (16818).

Elsewhere in the vicinity, the remains of further prehistoric settlement, comprising a ring ditch and a number of small enclosures, have been located *c* 1km to the east (15328), and three Neolithic and one late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pits were excavated on land to the east of Potton Road (Jones 2009). A 'barbed-and-tanged' flint arrowhead (16205) was found close to the railway track, near Shortmead House. Slightly further afield, archaeological investigation associated with the development of the Stratton Local Centre, to the east of Biggleswade, encountered prehistoric remains, including a Bronze Age ring ditch and an Iron Age pit (17733).

In the Roman period a road (*Viatores* 22) was built on the east bank of the River Ivel, to link the Roman small towns at Sandy and Baldock (66, 451 and 505). The route of the road runs north-north-west from Baldock and passes close to the western edge of the site, where there may be a junction with a minor Roman road in the vicinity of Furzenhall Road.

Roman settlement in the area has been identified on Biggleswade Common (446), approximately 1.8km to the north of the site, where there are cropmarks showing a double-ditched square enclosure and other features. Part of this settlement was excavated in 1959 and evidence was found for buildings and small enclosures, dated by pottery to the 3rd and 4th centuries (Johnston 1974). Roman remains have also been identified to the north and west of the sewage treatment plant, where there are rectilinear and circular cropmarks (15507), and an upstanding mound which may be a Roman barrow (165). Extensive Roman, as well as prehistoric and medieval remains have been investigated on the west bank of the River Ivel, at Warren Villas Quarry (3527 and 13974; Dawson and Maull 1996).

The historic medieval core of Biggleswade (17124) is situated *c* 0.8km to the south-west of the site and Saxon and medieval settlement remains have been located at Stratton, including the site of a moated enclosure (520) and deserted medieval village (518). Other medieval settlement remains in the area include the site of the village of Kinwick (775), listed in the Domesday Book as *Chenemondewiche*. To the north-east of the site, towards Potton, are the remains of a medieval field system (1615), and to the north-west, near the sewage farm, there is a rectilinear enclosure (16808), surviving as a slight earthwork, that is not shown on the 1838 tithe map but may be of medieval date. Cropmarks showing a complex block of rectilinear fields or plots between the River Ivel and a backwater to the east may form sub-divisions of 'Lammas' meadow, as shown on the 1838 tithe map. An undated human skull was washed out of river bank nearby (16111).

The site of a post-medieval or modern sand pit (13923) and brickworks (13924) are located in fields *c* 1km to the north of the site, and a backfilled quarry pit is known to have been in the area of the recreation ground on the adjacent housing estate to the south.

3 METHODOLOGY

Four trial trenches with a total length of 125 linear metres (*c* 250m^2) were excavated (Fig 3). Three of the trenches were 25m long and were positioned on the route of the sewer and a 50m long trench was excavated in the compound area. The trenches were marked out using Leica System 1200 GPS and were positioned in accordance with the trench location plan approved by CBCA and AWS. The trenches were excavated using a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All overburden was stripped under archaeological supervision, with the topsoil and subsoil stacked separately and adjacent to the trenches. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the top of the archaeological deposits, to the limits of safe working practice or to the natural substrate where no archaeology was encountered.

Archaeological excavation and recording followed the guidelines outlined in the NA *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (2003). Trenches containing archaeological remains were cleaned by hand, sufficient to define the features. Each feature or deposit was given a unique number consisting of the trench number and an individual context number (e.g. 402, Trench 4, context 2). The details of each context were recorded on *pro-forma* sheets. The trenches were planned (scale 1:50) and section drawings were made at an appropriate scale (1:10 or 1:20). Levels, which were related to Ordnance Datum, were taken on the trenches at appropriate points, on section datum and on all major features. Trench locations were related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record was made of the excavation, using both 35mm colour transparency and black and white negative films, supplemented by digital images.

Artefacts were collected by hand and retained, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from site (UKIC 1998). The spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. Unstratified animal bones and modern material were not retained. A 40 litre soil sample was taken from one of the Iron Age pits to assess the potential for environmental analysis. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of *Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedfordshire* (BCC 1998).

All works were carried out accordance with the IfA's *Code of Conduct* (1985, revised 2008) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (1994, revised 2008). In addition, all works complied with the guidelines set out in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003). All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

Bedford Museum has been contacted and an accession number has been obtained (BEDFM 2009.79). The project was monitored by Martin Oake, CBCA.

4 THE EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 General stratigraphy

Trenches 1 and 2 were located at the southern edge of a large arable field, sown with an emerging crop; Trenches 3 and 4 were located a little further to the west, in an area of set-aside, dominated by coarse grass and grassland flora (Fig 3).

The natural substrate, which occurred at an average depth of *c* 0.5m below ground level, was river terrace gravel, comprising fine to coarse gravel in an orange or mid brownish-orange silty sand matrix. The subsoil, which was approximately 0.15m thick, comprised dark brown sandy silt and the overlying topsoil, consisting of dark grey organic sandy silt with occasional small pebbles, was approximately 0.4m thick.

4.2 Trenches 1 to 3

Trenches 1 to 3 were aligned east to west and were positioned on the proposed route of the sewer. No archaeological features or artefacts were encountered in any of the trenches. Several irregular, shallow hollows investigated in Trench 2 were interpreted as modern disturbance, possibly associated with the former sand and gravel pit that used to be located immediately to the south of the trench, in the area now occupied by the recreation ground.

4.3 Trench 4

Trench 4, which was aligned north-east to south-west, was located in the area of the proposed site compound (Fig 4). In the northern half of the trench and spaced *c* 5m apart were two early to middle Iron Age pits, 404 and 411, both of which partly lay beyond the edge of the trench to the east, so their full dimensions could not be determined.

Near the centre of the trench, pit 404 had near vertical sides and a flat, slightly uneven base (Figs 5 and 6). It measured 1.57m wide by 0.52m deep and was largely filled with a homogeneous dark grey sandy silt (405) containing occasional fine to coarse, rounded to angular pebbles and charcoal flecks. A small assemblage of early to middle Iron Age pottery, animal bone and cereal grains was recovered from this deposit, and in addition, a small shale or jet bead was recovered from a soil sample taken from the pit. Around the rim of the pit and overlying the main fill was an intermittent deposit of sand and gravel (406).

Pit 411 was 1.65m wide by 0.67m deep and had a similar profile to pit 404 (Figs 7 and 8). The primary fill (410), which had accumulated around the edge of the base of the pit, was dark brownish grey sandy silt. Overlying this was a deposit of dark grey, almost black sandy silt (409), which was up to 0.31m thick near the centre of the pit, sealed by mid to dark brownish-grey sandy silt (408), up to 0.38m thick. All three deposits contained occasional

fine to coarse pebbles, charcoal flecks, fragments of animal bone and sherds of early to middle Iron Age pottery. As with pit 404, there was an intermittent deposit of silty sandy gravel (407) around the rim of the pit.

5 THE FINDS

5.1 **Iron Age pottery** by Andy Chapman

A total of 129 sherds, weighing 2.7kg, of hand-built pottery was recovered from the partial excavation of two pits. The average sherd weight is 20.9g, indicating that the material includes a high proportion of larger sherds, which are typically hard and unabraded, although there are also numerous quite heavily fragmented sherds. Based on the sherd characteristics, it is estimated that there are at least 33 sherd families, which indicates that some 33 vessels are present with the majority represented by only small numbers of sherds.

Fabrics
Nearby three-quarters of the assemblage is in shell-tempered fabrics, but with a wide variation from sparse inclusions of finely crushed shell to moderately dense inclusions of coarse shell.

Just under a quarter of the assemblage has inclusions of calcareous material, in the form of rounded chalky pellets, but these sherds also contain some shell and occasional flint or quartz pieces.

Fabric 1: Shelly, containing a sparse to moderate density of fine (< 2mm) to coarse (up to 5mm) crushed shell.
64 sherds, 71%

Fabric 2: Calcareous, containing rounded calcareous pellets, 2-5mm long.
21 sherds, 23% of assemblage

Fabric 3: Sandy, coarse surface texture and containing fine quartz grains.
6 sherds, 6% of assemblage

Pit 404
The homogeneous fill (405) of this pit contained 39 sherds of pottery, weighing 724g. The group comprises largely small and non-joining sherds from a wide range of vessels, with the number of sherd families estimated at a minimum of nine. This group predominately comprises shelly fabrics (there is a single sherd in a sandy fabric), but there are wide extremes from finer vessels containing only sparse finely crushed shell to coarser thicker-walled vessels containing dense coarse shell.

The finer vessels comprise a small slack-shouldered jar or bowl with a simple upright rounded rim, 100mm diameter. It is in an oxidised fabric, with a brown core and light brown to pale orange-brown surfaces. There is also a small jar in dark grey fabric with dark grey surfaces, with an abrupt shoulder and a long flaring neck, 25mm high, with a rounded rim, 180mm diameter. It is thin-walled, 7mm, with the neck drawn out to 5mm thick. There are some incised

striations on the shoulder and neck, and both the exterior and the upper part of the interior have been burnished.

The coarse hand-built vessels include the bases from two thick-walled jars, one 200mm diameter. In some of the coarser vessels the surfaces have been wiped, so that the shell inclusions are only evident in section, and the body sherds are plain, apart from a single vessel where there is vertical scoring.

Pit 411

The fills of this pit produced a total of 90 sherds of pottery weighing 1,975g. This comprises many small non-joining sherds from a wide range of vessels, with a total of at least 24sherd families present. However, the secondary fill (409) did contain a large group of sherds, some joining, from a large plain storage jar and a jar with scored decoration. Apart from this, as with pit 404, a considerable number of vessels are represented by small groups of sherds.

The material from the primary fill (410), six sherds weighing 148g, includes a large sherd from a hand-built abruptly carinated bowl, in a grey-black fabric with a smoothed inner surface and a highly burnished outer surface. There is also a small sherd from a thin-walled vessel, 5mm, in a sandy fabric with an oxidised, orange surface.

The secondary fill (409) contained 61 sherds, weighing 1557g, with some 10 sherd families present. This includes the complete base, 150mm diameter, from a large jar in a calcareous fabric. There are also body sherds in the same fabric, possibly the same vessel, with erratic scoring on the body that appears to have been carried out using plant material to create fine parallel striations. There are also several large body sherds from a plain, thick-walled (10mm) jar, with shallow finger impressions on the shoulder. These vessels all have oxidised light brown external surfaces. Of the four rim sherds there is an inturned rim from an open bowl, and two upright simple flat-topped rims. The other rim comes from a shouldered jar, with shallow finger impressions along the shoulder. The upright, flat-topped rim is decorated with elongated diagonal fingertip impressions.

The upper fill (408) contains a group similar to but much smaller than the material from the secondary fill, with 23 sherds weighing 270g. It includes at least one sherd from a vessel present in the secondary fill. Of particular note is the upright rounded rim from a thin-walled, 60mm thick, slack-shouldered bowl in a light brown oxidised fabric, with a lightly burnished external surface. There are also sherds from two vessels with inturned rims.

Chronology

The assemblage comprises mainly coarser hand-built wares, predominantly in shelly fabrics, from thick-walled jars, including a few sherds with scored body decoration. The shelly fabric can be equated to fabric F16 identified at large open-area excavations to the west at Stagsden bypass and Salford (Slowikowski, 2000, 63 and Slowikowski 2005, 103), while the smaller quantities of calcareous and sandy fabrics equate to fabrics F30 and F28/F29 from Salford. It is unusual to see shelly fabrics dominating an assemblage at a location well to the east of Bedford, but as this is a small group from only two pits the quantification may not be representative of the site as a whole. The core area for scored ware is to the north and west of Biggleswade,

between the rivers Trent and Nene, but scored ware vessels are not uncommon in both north Buckinghamshire and north Bedfordshire, with examples occurring as far south as the Chilterns (Slowikowski 2005, 106). The presence of scored ware indicates a broad middle Iron Age date, equating with Ceramic phase 4 (CP4) at Salford (Slowikowski 205, 105), and a date of *c* 400-150BC (Oake *et al* 2007, 63-65).

However, there are also a few finer vessels, including a burnished carinated bowl and a necked jar with a finger-impressed rim and finger impressions of the shoulder from pit 411, and a burnished jar/bowl from pit 404. These elements are more characteristic of earlier assemblages, equating to Ceramic phase CP3 at Salford (Slowikowski 2005, 105 and figs 2.29 & 2.31), Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age (c 9th-5th centuries BC). The absence of flint tempered fabrics (Slowikowski 2005, fig 3.2) would suggest that the material does not belong to the earlier part of this ceramic phase, and as these two pits are unlikely to have been in use for several hundred years, it can be suggested that the material is consistent with a date at the interface of these ceramic phases, the early-middle Iron Age (5th to 4th centuries BC).

5.2 **Bead** by Tora Hylton

A small, disc-shaped dark brown/black bead, possibly made from shale, jet or a similar fine-grained stone, was recovered from the main fill (405) of an early to middle Iron Age pit, 404. The bead has a diameter of 6mm and a drilled central hole with a diameter of 2.5mm (Fig 9). In profile, the bead has a wedge-shaped appearance, thinning from 1.5mm to 0.1mm thick across its diameter. The bead, which was presumably threaded on a necklace or bracelet, has no known regional comparisons.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 **Animal bone** by Karen Deighton

Introduction

A total of 1.7kg of animal bone was collected by hand from two early to middle Iron Age pits, 404 and 411. A small quantity (40g) of bone was also recovered from the soil sample taken from deposit (405), the main fill of pit 404. This material was assessed to ascertain the condition of the bone, the species present, the potential contribution of the material to the understanding of the site and to inform on future collection strategies.

Methodology and results

The animal bone was scanned and identifiable elements were noted (following Halstead 1985 after Watson 1979). The assemblage was assessed to determine the state of preservation and modification of the bone (after Binford 1981) and the presence of any available biometrical data (after von den Driesch 1976). Any available ageing data was noted, including state of epiphyseal fusion (after Silver 1969) and tooth eruption and wear (after Payne 1973 for sheep/goat and Halstead 1985 after Payne 1973 for cattle). A summary of the animal bone recovered from the two pits is given in Table 1

and the quantity of bones displaying ageing and metrical information in Table 2.

Table 1: Animal species present by context

Feature	**Pit 404**		**Pit 411**		
Species	405	408	409	410	Total
Cattle (*Bos*)	9	6	1	-	16
Sheep/goat (*Ovicaprid*)	3	4	3	-	10
Pig (*Sus*)	2	-	-	-	2
Deer (*Cervid*)	-	-	1	-	1
L. ungulate	1	1	-	-	2
S. ungulate	1	-	3	3	7
Amphibian	13	-	-	-	13
Indet.	3	-	-	-	3
Total	**32**	**11**	**8**	**3**	**54**

Table 2: Ageing and metrical data

Species	**Fusion**	**Tooth eruption and wear**	**Measurements**
Cattle (*Bos*)	7	1	6
Sheep/goat (*Ovicaprid*)	1	2	1
Pig (*Sus*)	-	1	-
Total	**8**	**4**	**7**

Fragmentation was at a fairly low level and fresh breaks were common. A low frequency of surface abrasion was noted. Canid gnawing was moderate, which could suggest the presence of dogs/foxes at the site. The low frequency of both surface abrasion and canid gnawing could suggest bone was rapidly buried after disposal. Burning was noted on bone from context (409). Evidence for butchery was restricted to a single example in context (405). Possible evidence of bone working was a small fragment of (red) deer antler which showed evidence of sawing.

Cattle were the most abundant taxon present, followed by sheep/goat with much smaller quantities of pig and (red) deer. Amphibian bones were recovered from the soil sample, along with three fragments of sheep/goat bone, which included a neonatal phalange. The presence of the bones of small invertebrates and neonates demonstrates that the soils on the site are generally favourable to the preservation of bone.

Discussion

The dominance of cattle is not uncommon for a site of this period. Deer is represented by an antler fragment which could suggest collection of shed antler as opposed to hunting. The mixed nature of the assemblage (both in terms of the body parts and the taxa represented) suggests its origin to be waste from food preparation.

The degree of preservation and identifiability were reasonable and some ageing and metrical data were available. Consequently, assessment suggests that the collection of further material from dateable contexts, should

further excavation take place, would provide information on the animal economy of the site. Further work would provide add to the corpus of existing work for the region and provide useful comparendra for any study in the future.

6.2 Plant macrofossils

A single 40 litre soil sample was collected by hand from the fill (405) of an early to middle Iron Age pit, 404. This was assessed to determine the presence, preservation and nature of any ecofacts.

The sample was processed in a modified siraf tank fitted with a 500micron mesh and a 250micron mesh flot sieve. The resulting flot was dried and examined under a microscope (up to x 20 magnification) and any ecofacts were noted. Cereal grains and other seeds were identified with the aid of the author's reference collection. A summary of the material recovered from the sample is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Ecofacts recovered from pit 404, fill (405)

Description	No.
Hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*)	1
Spelt (*Triticum spelta*)	2
Wheat/barley (*Triticum*/*Hordeum*)	15
Fat hen (*Chenopodium album*)	14
Charcoal	1,000+

The plant remains were preserved solely by charring, although the identification of the cereal grains was hampered by their abraded and fragmentary condition. The presence of the charred cereal grains suggests domestic or crop processing activity in the vicinity, with the possible disposal of spoiled grain in the pit. The potential of the environmental remains in the pits to contribute to an understanding of domestic and agricultural practices in the early to middle Iron Age is considered moderate to high.

7 DISCUSSION

The evaluation identified two early to middle Iron Age pits in the area designated for the site compound. No archaeological remains were encountered in the trial trenches positioned along the proposed route of the pipeline.

The Iron Age pits were spaced *c* 5m apart and were almost identical in size and profile. Both pits contained an assemblage of early to middle Iron Age pottery sherds from a wide range of vessels and a small quantity of animal bone and charred cereal grain. A small stone bead, probably made from shale or jet, was recovered from pit 404.

The homogeneity of the main fill of pit 404 and the absence of slumping at the pit edges suggests that it was left open for a very short time, and was then deliberately backfilled with topsoil. Once the pit had largely been backfilled, the remaining gap around the edge was filled in with excavated gravel or was left to infill through the natural erosion of the pit sides. Although it contained more differentiated deposits, pit 411 also appears to have been backfilled after a very short period of time, as there was no evidence for the collapse or weathering of the relatively loose gravel pit sides, except around the upper edge.

The presence of the pits and the domestic nature of the artefacts recovered from them suggest that there may be a small early to middle Iron Age settlement, perhaps dating to the 5th to 4th centuries BC, in the immediate vicinity.

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Maps

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Northamptonshire Archaeology
A service of Northamptonshire County Council 6th January 2010

APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF FEATURES AND LEVEL DATA

Summary of features and finds

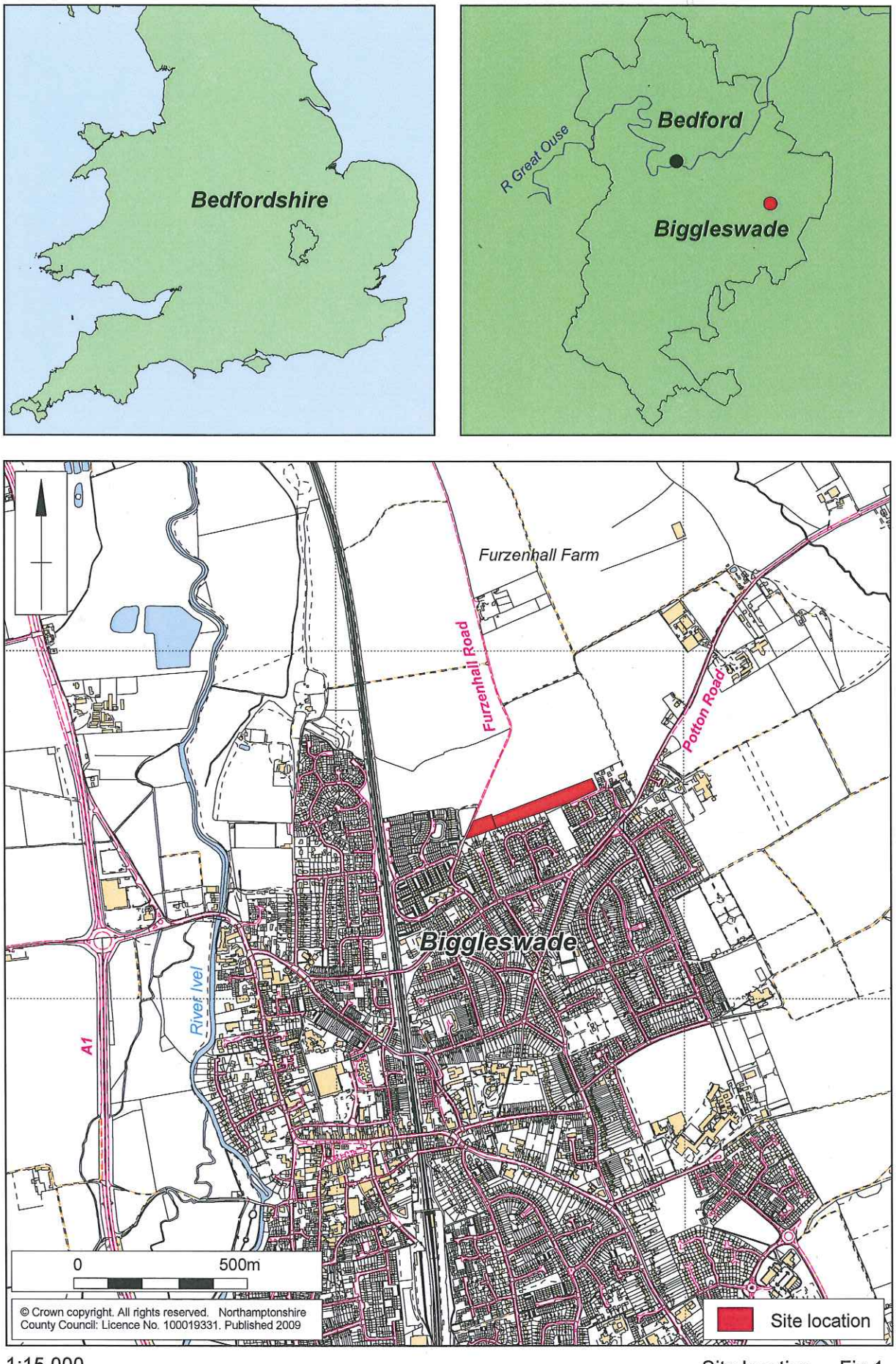
Trench no.	Context no.	Feature type	Date of feature	Finds	Depth [1] (m)
1	101	Topsoil	-	-	0.52
	102	Subsoil	-	-	
	103	Natural	-	-	
2	201	Topsoil	-	-	0.53
	202	Subsoil	-	-	
	203	Natural	-	-	
3	301	Topsoil	-	-	0.43
	302	Subsoil	-	-	
	303	Natural	-	-	
4	401	Topsoil	-	-	0.48
	402	Subsoil	-	-	
	403	Natural	-	-	
	406 405 [404]	Pit	Early-middle Iron Age	- P B bead	
	407 408 409 410 [411]	Pit	Early-middle Iron Age	- P B P B P B	

[1] Average depth of archaeological features, or natural substrate where no archaeology present, below ground level

Key: B bone; P pottery

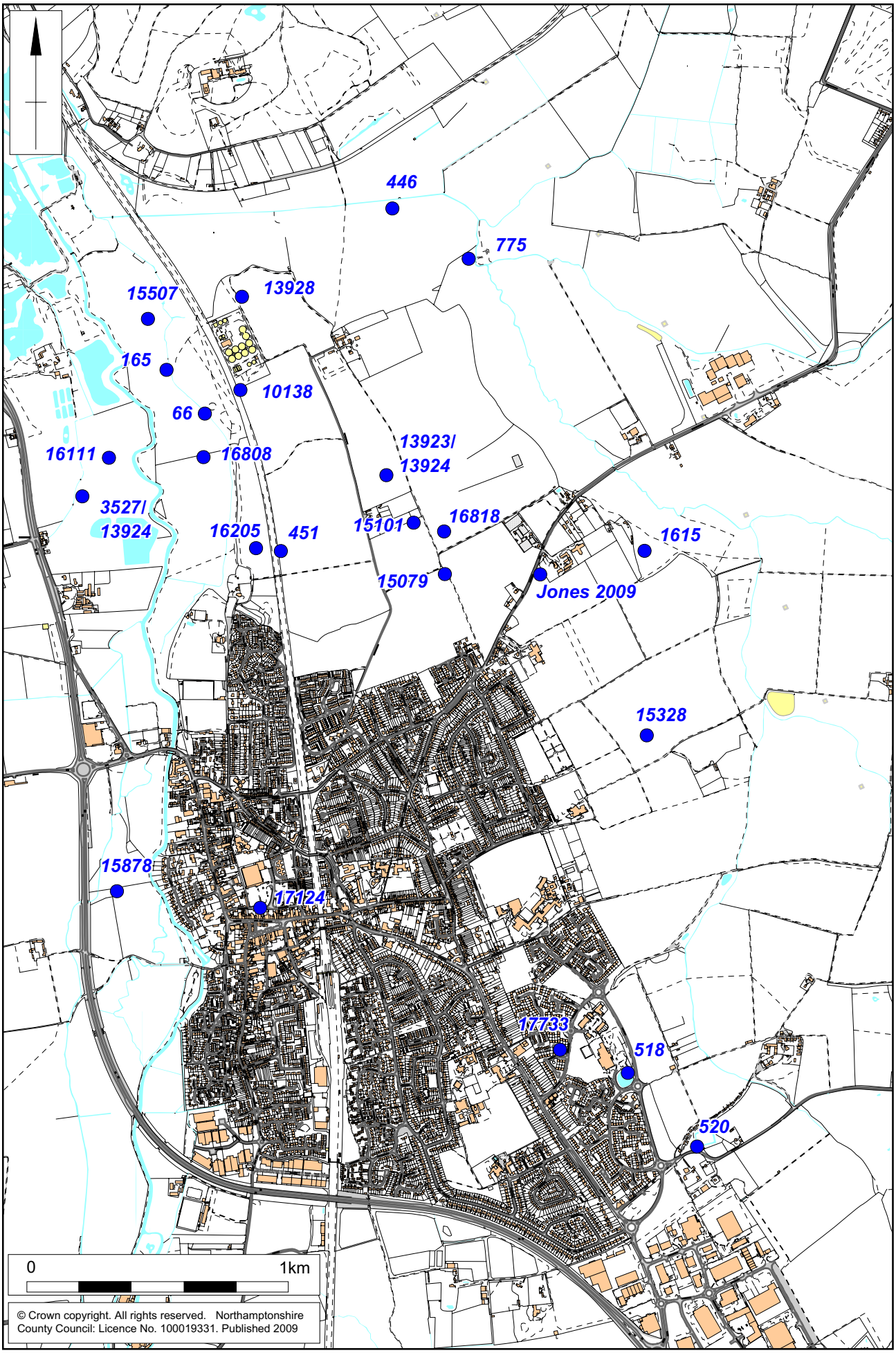
Level data (aOD)

	Distance (m)						
Trench no.	**0**	**10**	**20**	**25**	**30**	**40**	**50**
1 (E)	34.31	-	-	34.34	-	-	-
	33.83	-	-	33.85	-	-	-
2 (E)	33.94	-	-	34.00	-	-	-
	33.48	-	-	33.61	-	-	-
3 (E)	33.03	-	-	33.73	-	-	-
	33.45	-	-	33.30	-	-	-
4 (SW)	33.41	33.02	33.18	33.29	33.25	33.34	32.92
	33.01	32.42	32.71	32.74	32.80	32.94	32.41



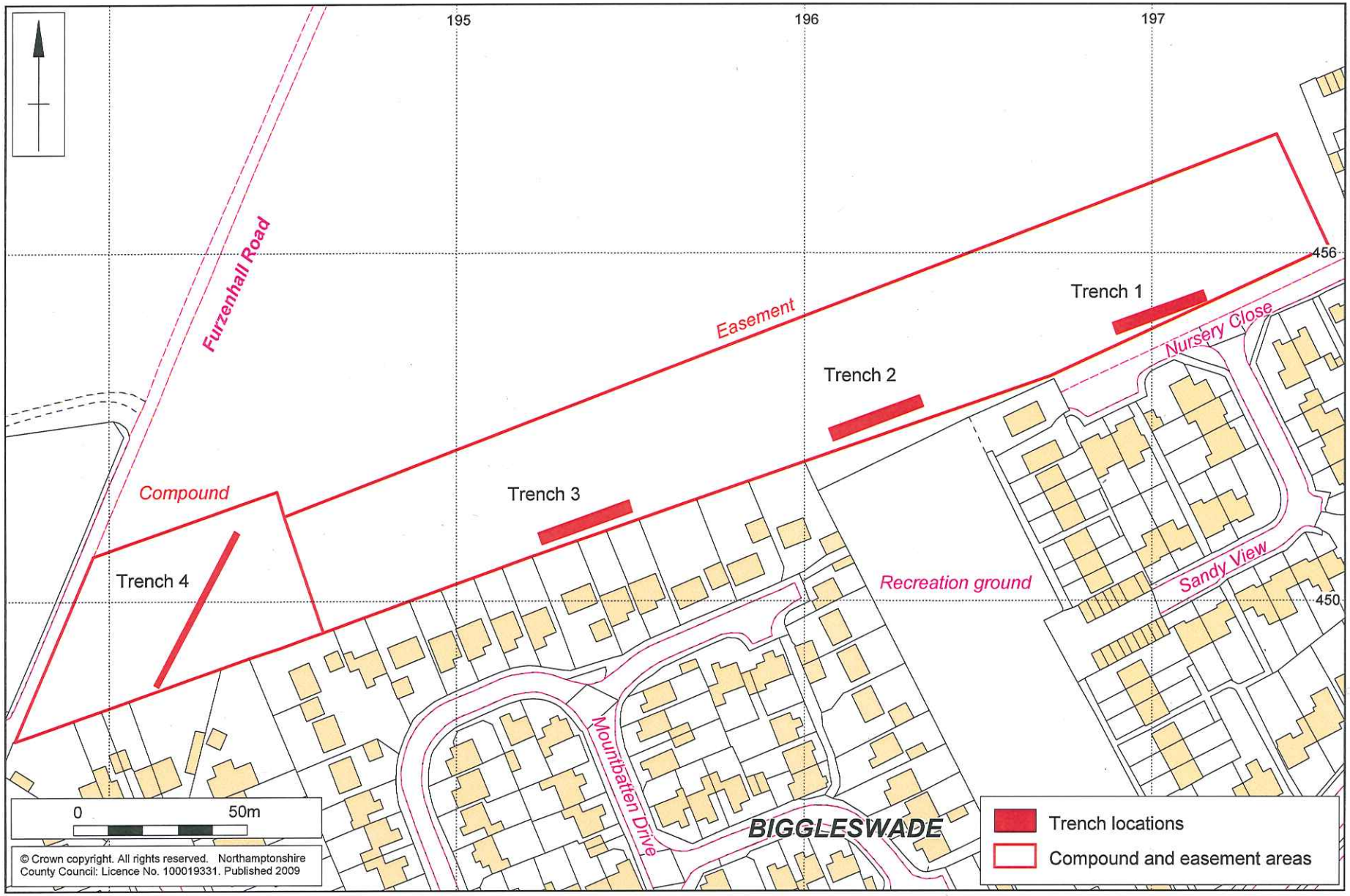
1:15,000

Site location Fig 1



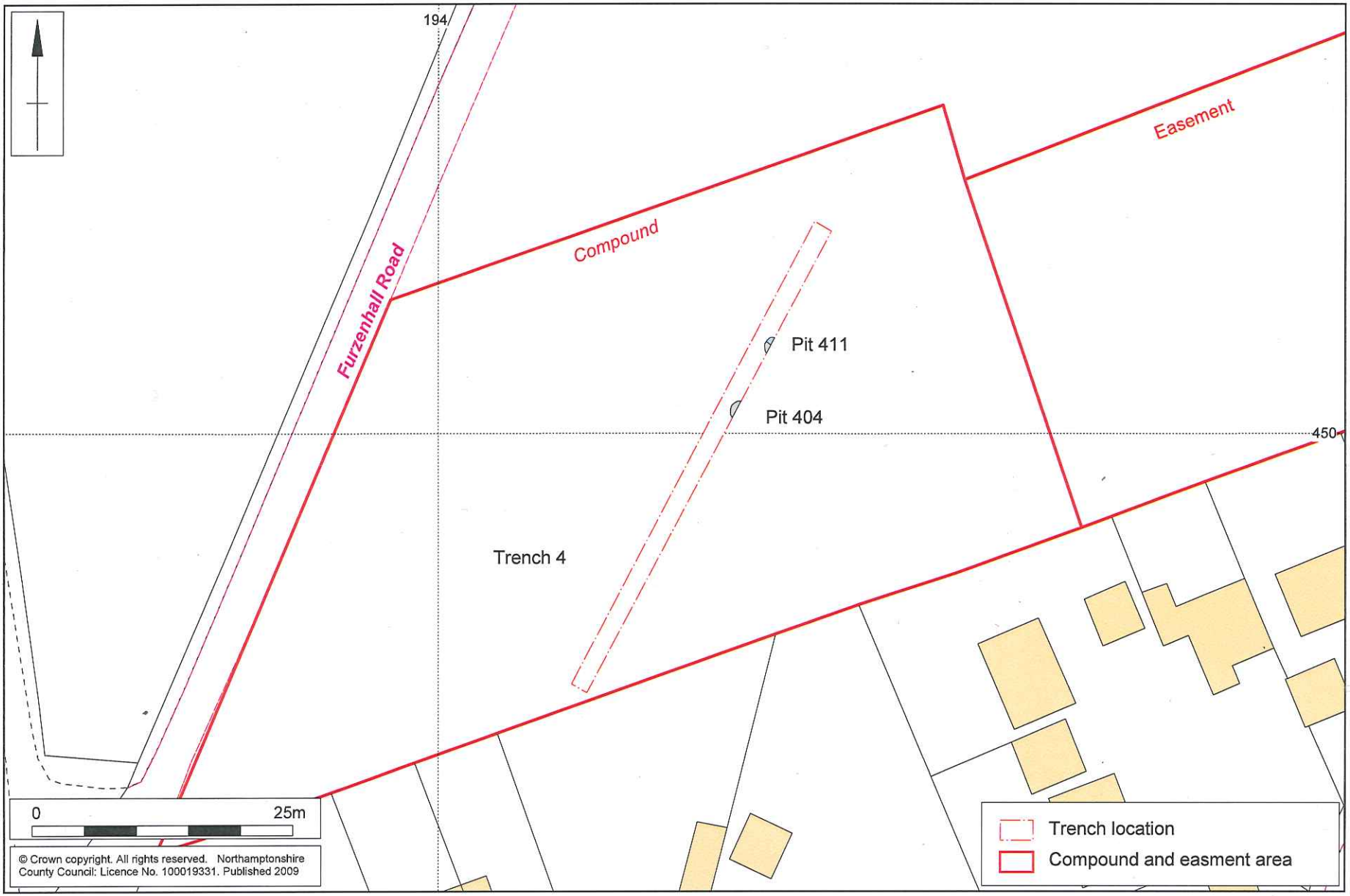
1:20,000

Historic Environment Record (HER) locations Fig 2



1:1,250

Trench location plan Fig 2



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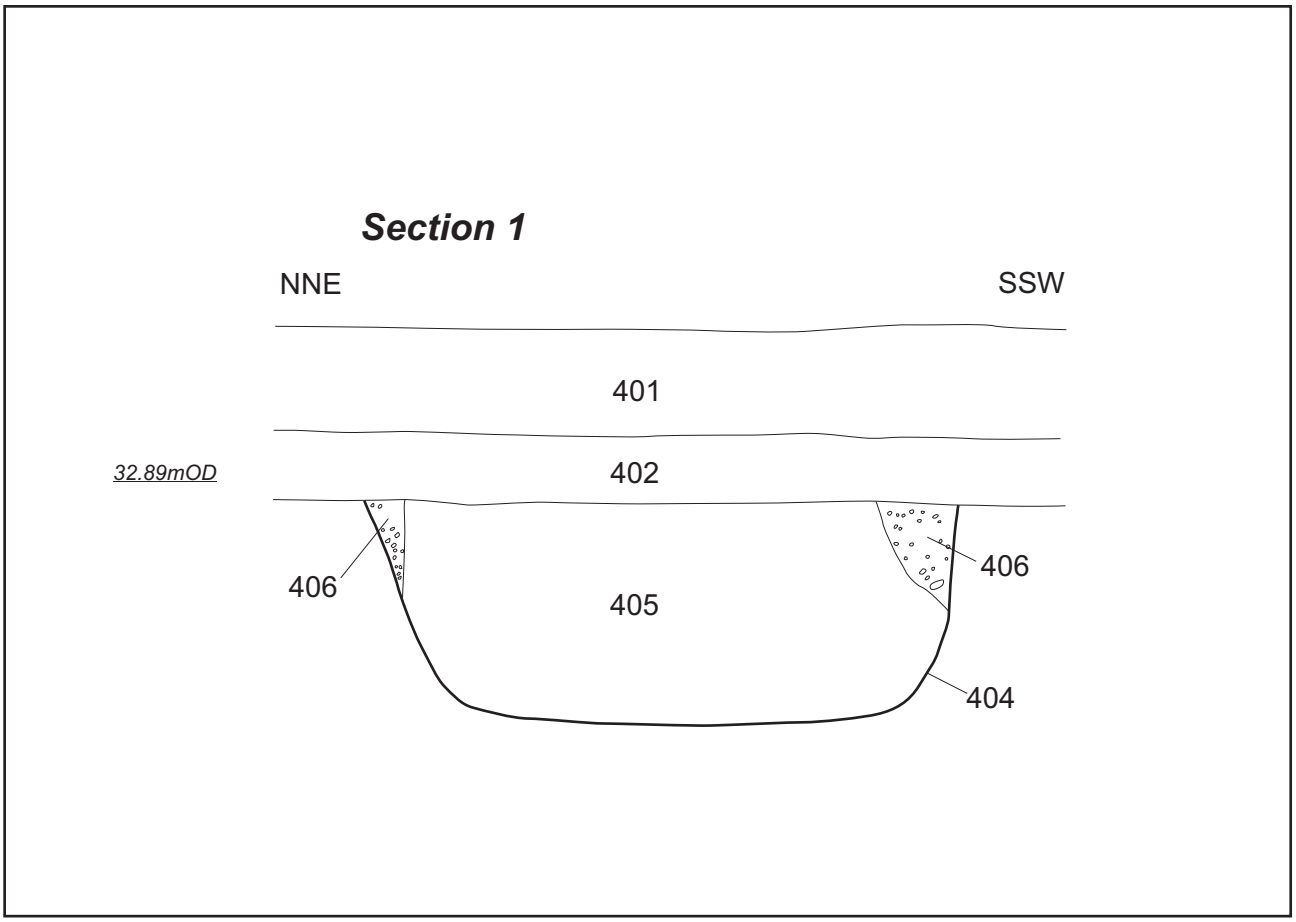
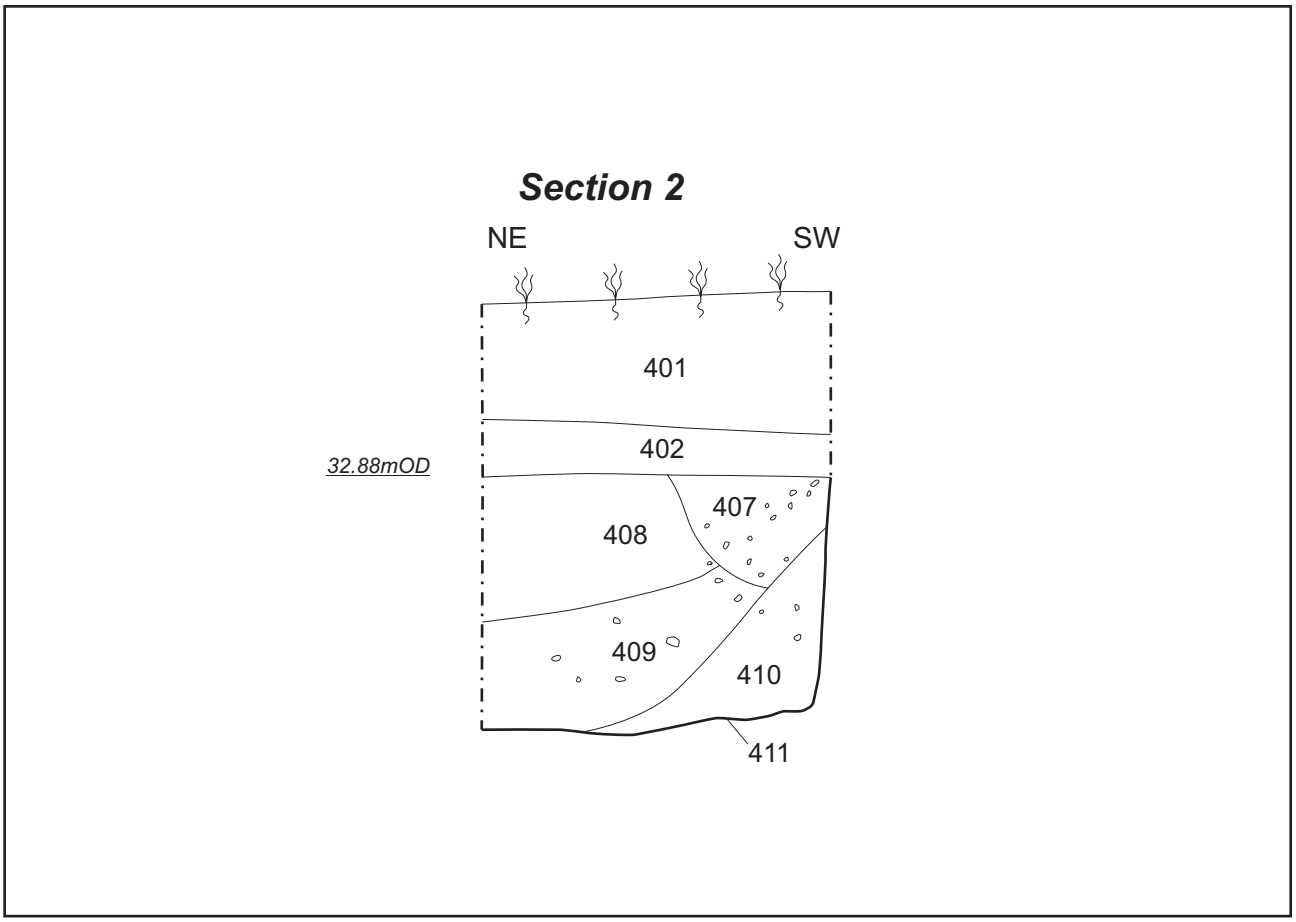
Plan of Trench 4 Fig 3



Pit 404, Section 1 Fig 5

Trench 4, Iron Age pit 404, facing south-east Fig 6



Pit 411, Section 2 Fig 7

Trench 4, Iron Age pit 411, facing south-east Fig 8

(External diameter 6mm) Stone bead from pit 404 Fig 7

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