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Trench 1-4 - Excavation
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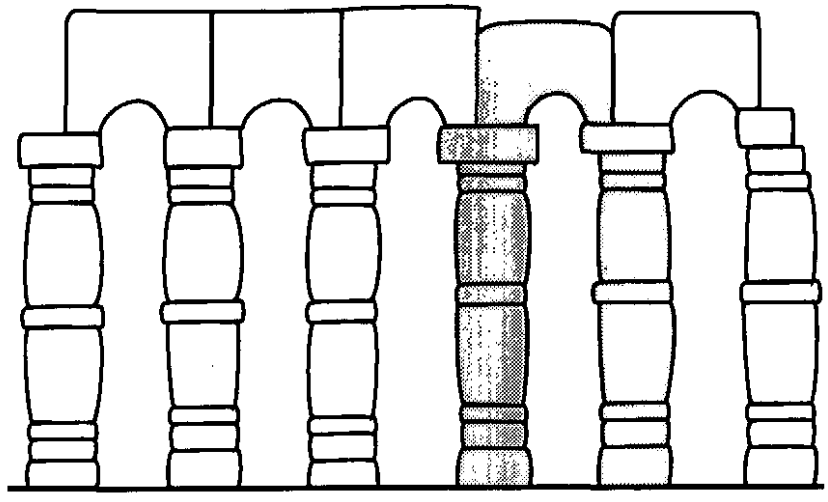

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGY

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT, GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY AND TRIAL EXCAVATION ON LAND OFF MALLARD CLOSE, EARLS BARTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

APRIL 2000

11/10/2000 KB

Excavation ENN 100481
Geophysics ENN 100480 - gene
ENN 103279 - deta
Desk based - ENN 104485

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

MARCH 2000

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Abstract

An archaeological evaluation involving a desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and trial excavation was carried out on land off Mallard Close, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire (NGR 85366458). Iron Age and Roman archaeological remains were uncovered in the northern half of the site. In the southern half of the site both trial trenches only uncovered natural sand and ironstone. Though there may have been quarrying on the extreme western part of the development area, archaeological remains may survive within an area of c.105m by 55m.

The detailed geophysical survey seems to confirm the desk-based assessment that the Iron Age and Roman settlement remains found during pipe laying in 1974, less than 100m to the north, may have continued into the development area. The geophysical survey found a rectangular enclosure as well as several external linear ditches in the northwestern quarter of the site. The rest of the site was inaccessible for the survey due to large amounts of iron and other materials together with overgrown areas.

An evaluation trench was located through part of the enclosure as well as three smaller trenches positioned to assess other parts of the development area. The main trench found archaeological features c.0.2m below the present ground level which confirmed the results of the geophysical survey and identified further features internal and external of the enclosure including gullies, pits and a possible posthole. The earliest feature on the site was the enclosure ditch, nearly 4m wide and 1.25m deep, which had pottery in its fills dating from the probable transitional middle Iron Age to late Iron Age up to the early Belgic period. Two soil samples from the ditch showed there was crops being grown with grain, pulses and weed seeds recovered. The absence of chaff and small numbers of weed seeds would seem to suggest a late stage in crop processing.

An internal gully to the enclosure as well as an external pit was dated to mid to late first century AD. The pit contained a very large primary Belgic assemblage including a quantity of flaked sherds or sherds with spalling which suggests that a pottery kiln may be nearby. In a gully 1m to the east there were the remains of a probable kiln spacer. The remaining features in the trench produced early Roman pottery as well as residual Belgic pottery. The large amount of animal bone especially from the late Iron Age to early Belgic period, several with butchery marks, shows domestic activity on the site. The species represented suggests livestock farming was carried out on the site and the range of body parts found could denote butchery waste.

In a small trench 6.8m long which was positioned about 30m to the south east of the enclosure there were three roughly parallel gullies and a later Roman pit all dating to the third or fourth centuries AD. Neither of the other two trenches found archaeological remains.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and trial excavation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology over March and April 2000 as a series of stages of an

archaeological evaluation on a proposed development area of approximately 1.57 hectares of land off Mallard Close, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire (Fig 1; NGR 85366458).

1.2 An outline planning consent has been submitted to Wellingborough Borough Council concerning this site (WP99/05565/O). Northamptonshire Heritage has stated that an archaeological evaluation of the area should be undertaken to inform consideration of this application. An archaeological brief prepared by Northamptonshire Heritage dated 10th February 2000 listed the proposed objectives and strategy of works (Flitcroft 2000).

1.3 The strategy involved three processes. Firstly, for the desk-based assessment the archaeological contractor was instructed to consult:-

1) Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record (here after SMR) and all relevant sources cited therein.

2) Historic maps held by the Northamptonshire Record Office (Here after NRO) or listed in Northamptonshire Heritage's map in their brief. Relevant information on the application area was to be transcribed to a first edition OS base with the objective that the mapping should consider both the likely survival of historic features and the impact of any subsequent activities.

1.4 The second process stipulated that there should be a systematic geophysical reconnaissance survey to be carried out over the whole site with an allowance for conducting a detailed magnetometer survey over up to 20% of the site.

1.5 Thirdly, a maximum of 60m of trenching was required. The precise location and dimension of the trenches to be proposed by the contractor after the results of the geophysical survey had been completed. The positions of these trenches had to be agreed with both the developers and Northamptonshire Heritage before start of the fieldwork.

2. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

2.1 Both the SMR and NRO were consulted over the period 20th to the 22nd March 2000. The SMR provided a print out of all known records in the grid square SP85/64 and all the records cited in this kilometre square were researched. All relevant historic maps were

looked at in the NRO to ascertain information about past land use and historic features and buildings.

2.2 SMR

2.2.1 The following SMR sources may be relevant to the application area:

3736/0/1	Archaeological remains found in pipe trench
8406/1/1	part of a small 20th century quarry

2.2.2 Record 3736/0/1

Probable Iron Age features were reported by Mr R Harper, less than 100m north of the development area, in the laying of a pipe trench in 1973 (Fig 1; Harper 1974, 83). Mr Harper recorded that, "A 200ft. section of the Northampton to Wellingborough pipeline near the cemetery revealed six ditches. Body sherds of probable late Iron Age pottery were recovered stratified from some of the features. One worked flint was also found along with an amount of unstratified Roman pottery concentrated in one particular area of the pipeline spoil heap." (Harper 1974, 83).

2.2.3 Record 8406/1/1

An early 20th century quarry was recorded in the area by E Tonks in part of his book on Northampton quarries (Fig 1; Tonks 1989, 140-150). The article recorded that part of the application area was in 1913 leased from William Chetwode Whitworth to the Earls Barton Iron Ore Co. ltd. Tonks in his article drew the area of the quarry at a very small scale (Tonks 1989, 142). According to this small plan the western half of the application site was quarried in the period 1915-1921 though the 3rd edition OS map (see below) implies the quarry edges were c.30m to the west of Tonks's map. The rough area of the quarry has been transcribed using both maps with the quarry boundaries are therefore tentative (Fig 1). Tonks's map showed a railway down the centre with quarrying on either side of it. With the demise of the quarry, the fields were later restored according to the provision of the lease.

2.3 NRO

2.3.1 Map evidence shows the application site is more than 500m north of the present historic core of Earls Barton. It is therefore very likely that the proposed development area lies outside to the north of medieval settlement of Earls Barton but within its area of strip fields.

2.3.2 1838 Inclosure Map NRO MAP 2886 (Fig 2).

The earliest map concerning the application site is the 1838 Inclosure Map which itself is based on the 1772 enclosure awards. This map shows that most of the site (except the extreme eastern area) was within a field owned by W C Whitworth. This field was first rented in 1772 to J and E Earl then later by 1838 to A H Main.

2.3.3 The small extreme eastern area of the application site was recorded in the 1838 Inclosure Map as part of an allotment area owned by the parish church wardens.

2.3.4 Ordnance Survey map, 1st edition 1884 6-inch (Map NRO 123)

The field boundaries in the application area have remained the same compared with the earlier map.

2.3.5 Ordnance Survey map, 2nd edition 1901 6-inch XXXIX SW (Fig 3)

The field boundaries in the application area have remained the same compared with the 1838 map. Part of the allotment field, to the east and north of the application area, had become a cemetery from August 30th 1890.

2.3.6 Ordnance Survey map, 2nd edition 1901 25-inch XXXIX 13

The 25 inch map is identical except it shows a very small area in the NE of the Whitworth field, over 100m north of the development area, being used to quarry sand. The less detailed 6 inch map leaves this out (Fig 3). It is uncertain whether other parts of the field had been used to quarry sand around this period but between the surveying of the maps.

2.3.7 Ordnance Survey map, 3rd edition 1926 6-inch XXXIX SW (Fig 4)

The 3rd edition OS map shows the main field boundary to the west of the site had gone and the remains of the tramway in the field. This tramway cuts the extreme south west corner of the development area. The quarry edges themselves are not shown so the area seems to have been backfilled. This map does not completely match up with Tonks's small scale map (see above) and so the quarry edges in Figure 1 may not be totally accurate.

2.3.8 In the last 75 years, Earls Barton has expanded up to and including most of the application site. The present OS map (Fig 5) shows that within the former Whitworth field, the application site was a caravan holding park. The allotment field had been again reduced in size with the southern part taken partly for an industrial estate. The northern part of this area has never been developed with the modern OS map has it empty though a travelling crane is recorded as occupying the southern half.

3. GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

3.1 Geophysical survey was carried out using a Geoscan Research FM36 Fluxgate Gradiometer. A total of 8 grids, each 20m x 20m (0.32 ha), was surveyed in order to locate any surviving archaeology. Parallel traverses were made from E to W at walking pace, with individual readings taken at 0.25m intervals using a sample trigger for the rapid recording of data. The sensor alignment or balance was checked upon the completion of survey within each grid square and tilt error was maintained below +/-2nT per +/- 20 degree tilt.

3.2 The data were analysed using the computer program Geoplot 3.00 for Windows. Low magnetism is represented as white and high magnetism as black in the resultant raw data grey scale plot (Fig. 6).

3.3 The magnetometer results indicated the presence of significant anomalies shown by the grey-scale plot and denoting an enclosure and associated internal features (Fig. 6). The information of individual readings is represented as raw data. The plotting parameters are -2 nT (shown as white) to +3nT (shown as black) with a contrast factor of 1.

Results and Interpretation

3.4 Part of a rectangular enclosure was detected which measures 30m across but has an unknown length. Two individual anomalies were identified within the enclosure and can be interpreted as representing pits. 37361014 37361011

3.5 To the south of the enclosure are three linear and curvilinear anomalies possibly denoting ditches. Areas shown as black blotches represent high magnetic readings of modern disturbance. 37361012

3.6 No other significant anomalies were detected and no indication of where the former quarry edge once was.

4. TRIAL EXCAVATION

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Four trial trenches were excavated over three days in the last week in March. They were located both to investigate the rectangular enclosure detected by geophysical survey as well as other areas of the development area which had been inaccessible for the survey.

4.1.2 All trenches were excavated by a JCB type machine with 1.5m toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Machining was excavated onto either archaeological features or, where there was no archaeology, onto natural sands and limestone. All trenches were cleaned, photographed and surveyed using a metal detected.

4.2 Trench 1 (Fig 9)

4.2.1 The trench was 30m long and located to investigate external linear features outside the rectangular enclosure identified in the geophysical survey as well the south and east side of the enclosure ditch. This trench also provided an opportunity to examine if there were any internal features, associated with the enclosure.

4.2.2 A layer of cobbles (1) c.0.1m thick were removed across the trench. These had been presumably laid when the site became a caravan holding park several years ago. Below the cobbles there was a remnant of topsoil (2) which consisted of an orange brown loamy sand

which was 0.1m thick on the west side of the trench deepening to 0.25m on the east side. There seems to be some truncation of the topsoil. There is a modern earthen bank around the north and part of the east and west side of the development area. This is presumably the topsoil which had been scraped from the site. The fill contained a few sherds of Belgic pottery including part of a bowl (Fig 13, no. 16).

4.2.3 Beneath the topsoil were a number of features cutting the natural bedrock which consisted of sand and ironstone. A small pit (3) which was sub rounded with a diameter of 1m and a depth of 0.55m was found 1.2m east of the west baulk partly exposed in the north baulk. The pit area within the trench was first excavated (Fig 9, S 3). The fill consisted of a grey brown sandy fill with a little loam and some sub angular ironstone up to 0.15m in length, several of which were burnt. The recovery of a substantial amount of pottery, seemingly a primary deposit, resulted in the whole pit being excavated. Two hundred and thirty four sherds of Belgic pottery and a possible intrusive samian sherd was recovered from its fill (Fig 12, nos. 8-11 and Fig 13,nos. 12-15). The Belgic pottery was dated as middle first century AD to late first century while the samian was dated 70AD to the late second century. 3736/012

4.2.4 One meter to the west of pit (3) was a linear gully (4) running in a north to south direction. It was 0.65m wide and 0.3m deep with fairly steep edges and a flat base (Fig 9, S 2). Its fill was a mid greyish brown loamy sand fill with small to medium sub-angular ironstone pieces up to 60mm in length. A substantial amount of pottery (71sherds) mostly Roman but some late Iron Age/early Roman sherds were found as in its fill as well as part of a probably fired clay kiln spacer, an iron nail, part of an iron binding strip and a few iron slag fragments. 3736/013

4.2.5 Just to the west of (4) was another gully (5), aligned roughly east to west, 0.8m wide and 0.6m deep with near vertical edges and a roundish base (Fig 9, S 1). Its fill contained an orange brown loamy sand fill with a few stones up to 90mm in length. It is a possibly that the this gully was seen on the geophysical survey as a curvilinear gully running into the enclosure ditch. Two late Iron Age/ early Roman and four grey ware Roman pottery sherds were recovered from the fill. This gully cut the west side of the enclosure ditch (16). Another gully (7) cut the east side of the enclosure ditch as well as the natural subsoil. This gully ran roughly east to west, 0.9m wide and 0.44m deep it had c.70° edges and a slightly roundish base. In the dark grey brown loamy sand fill was some late Iron Age to Belgic pottery including two joining sherds with decoration (Fig 11, no 6).

4.2.6 The enclosure ditch was more than 3m wide and 1.25m deep (Fig 9, S 1). If the truncation by gullies (5) and (7) is taken into account the ditch was up to 4m wide. Its edges were relatively shallow c.45° with a flat base. Its primary fill was a dark grey/black ash and loamy sand fill with the occasional small clay patch. This may be a deliberate dumping of soil. A 20 litre soil sample was taken from its fill contained cereal, pulses and weed chard grain. The next fills were a slumping on both edges (17 and 20) containing redeposited natural. This implies the ditch was left open for a period of time for the weathering to occur. 3736/0/4

4.2.7 From the east and west side there were two layers tipping downwards (18 and 19). Layer (18) was a very dark grey loamy sand with frequent charcoal flecks and a few small ironstone pieces up to 60mm in length. A 15 litre soil sample was taken and contained a moderate amount of chard seeds including cereal and weeds as well as fragments of iron slag. Layer (19) was grey brown loamy sand with some ironstone pieces up to 90mm in length. The upper fill (6) of the enclosure ditch was a grey brown loamy sand fill with some ironstone pieces up to 0.1m in length several of which had been burnt. There were several later Iron Age pottery sherds from the fill as well as a single fragment of iron slag.

4.2.8 Two metres to the west of the enclosure ditch (16) was a possible posthole (8). It was oval in shape 0.7m by 0.4m and 0.22m deep. Its irregular shape may have been caused by the removal of the post after disuse. Its fill was mid dark grey brown loamy sand which contained seven pottery sherds including a Roman grey ware sherd. 3736/0/5

4.2.9 Next to the possible posthole was a gully running north-west to south-east (9). It was 1.05m wide and 0.5m deep. Its edges were c.55° degrees before ending in a near vertical sided slot 0.12m wide and 0.15m deep. Pottery recovered from its fill included nine late Iron Age/early Roman sherds and seven greyware sherds including half a dish (Fig 13,no 17). 3736/0/6

4.2.10 Just to the west was a probable small pit (10) 0.8m by 0.64m and 0.2m deep. Its fill was a mid orange brown loamy sand which contained a four sherds of late Iron Age/early Roman pottery. 3736/0/7

4.2.11 Next to this pit, part of a possible curvilinear gully (11) was partly exposed for a length of 6.3m along the northern trench edge. The gully was 0.27m deep and had a steep south sided edge c.80° with a flat base (Fig 9, S4) and its fill consisted of an orange brown loamy 3736/0/6

sand with an occasional small ironstone piece up to 50mm in length. The pottery contained within the fill comprised three late Iron Age/early Roman sherds including a rim from a storage vessel (Fig 11, no 7) as well as three pieces of Roman grey ware.

4.2.12 Gully (11) was cut by a small ditch (12) running east to west which was 1.7m wide and up to 0.35m deep with gently sloping edges c.40° and a very gently rounded base (Fig 9, S 4 and 5). Its fill was a grey brown loamy sand with some limestone pieces up to 80mm in length. Ditch (12) was cut by a linear gully (21) next to the south baulk. This gully ran north to south from the baulk before butt ending in the middle of the trench. It was 0.45m wide and 0.2m deep with edges at c.60° with a flat base. Its fill was an orange brown loamy sand with some stones up to 60mm in length and 13 sherds of Roman greyware pottery as well as three iron objects including a possible terminal.

4.2.13 Immediately to the west of this gully was the east enclosure ditch (27) which was just over 4m wide and more than 1.1m deep (Fig 9, S 6). The ditch was not bottomed though its edges were c.50° cutting the natural sand. It was filled with several layers tipping down from either side. The two earliest layers partly excavated were (26) on the east side of the ditch and (24) on the west side. The fills were respectively an orange brown loamy sand and a dark grey brown loamy sand with ash. Pottery from (24) was in good condition and contained reasonably large sherds of the late Iron Age (Fig 11,no 1). There was also 37 pieces of animal bone found in the fill.

4.2.14 Above (24 and 25) was layer (23) which tipped down from the east and consisted of a grey brown loamy sand with some charcoal flecks and a few small stones. Pottery from it included two sherds of highly burnished of early Belgic type (Fig 11,no 4 and 5) and a storage vessel (Fig 11,no 3). Some 87 pieces of animal bone weighing over a kilogram was also recovered from the fill. Layer (22) overlaid (23) and consisted of a grey brown loamy sand with some stones up to 80mm in length and contained some late Iron Age pottery including part of a decorated vessel (Fig 11,no 2).

4.2.15 Taken together layers 22-25 seem to be a deliberate backfilling of the ditch possibly in the Belgic period. The fills had large quantities of animal bone and some large sherds of pottery which may represent a dump of domestic waste.

4.2.16 Sealing these layers was a layer of redeposited natural yellow sand (25) and then a grey brown loamy sand with few stones (13). There were some late Iron Age pottery sherds as well as 54 pieces of animal bone.

4.2.17 Cutting the enclosure ditch on the west side was a shallow ditch (14) which ran east to west. It was 1.48m wide and 0.4m deep. It had fairly steep edges c.65° and a flatish base. It was a grey brown loamy sand and from the top of the layer there was a Roman grey ware sherd.

4.3 Trench 2

4.3.1 The trench was located near the south west corner of the development area (Fig 6). It was in an area outside the geophysical survey and so the aim was to see if any archaeology continued in this direction.

4.3.2 The trench was 5.3m long and exposed clean yellow sands and ironstone up to 0.7m below ground level. There was considerable compacted modern build up between the natural and the ground surface. No archaeological features were present.

4.4 Trench 3 (Fig 10)

4.4.1 Trench 3 was 6.8m long and was machined to a depth of 0.29m where archaeological features as well as natural sand and ironstone was exposed. The trench was located in the extreme east part of the site about half way down the eastern boundary (Fig 6). It was in the area where the geophysical survey was not able to access and the aim was therefore to see if any archaeology seen in the north side was continuing down within this area.

4.4.2 Three small linear gullies (31, 33 and 34) were seen running in a roughly east to west direction across the trench. Gully (34) was at least 0.4m wide and 0.3m deep with its south edge c. 60° with a slightly roundish base (Fig 10, S 7). Its fill was an orange brown loamy sand with a few small ironstone pieces up to 70mm in length but was undated.

4.4.3 The gully was cut on its north side by gully (31) which was 0.7m wide and 0.33m deep with fairly steep edges c.70° edges and a roundish base (Fig 10, S 7). Its fill consisted of an yellow/orange brown loamy sand with some ironstone pieces as well as 19 sherds of Roman pottery including Nene Valley Colour Coated wares dating to the third and fourth centuries.

Gully (31) seemed to cut gully (33) on the north side of the trench. Gully (33) was 0.4m wide and 0.17m deep with gently sloping edges c.40° (Fig 10, S 7). Its fill was a orange brown loamy sand with a few small ironstone pieces and it contained two sherds of Roman including a third to fourth century Nene Valley Colour Coated ware sherd.

4.4.4 Pit (32) cut gullies (31 and 33) and was sub rounded in shape 1.07m by 0.9m with a depth of 0.42m (Fig 10 S 8). The pit had steep edges between 70° and 80° with a flat base and an orange brown loamy sand fill with the occasional small limestone fragment which contained 11 sherds of Roman pottery dating to the third to fourth centuries.

4.5 Trench 4

4.5.1 The trench was excavated in former allotment land at the extreme southeast part of the proposed development. It was part of an area where there had been no geophysical survey. The trench was 21.4m long and excavated onto natural yellow sand with ironstone patches, 0.2m below the ground level. The topsoil had been removed a few years ago. There were no archaeological features in the trench.

5. IRON AGE AND BELGIC POTTERY by Dennis Jackson

5.1 Introduction

Approximately 386 sherds (14,736g) of late Iron Age and early Roman pottery was recovered from Trench 1.

5.2 Late Iron Age enclosure ditch

5.2.1 The two sections cut across the main enclosure ditch produced 66 sherds (1801g) of pottery dating to the late Iron Age/early Belgic period.

5.2.2 Fabric

Although the assemblage is small it is possible to list the six main fabric types:-

1. Very hard fabric containing grog, quartz, or stone grits, in varying quantities (11 sherds)
2. Similar inclusions as Fabric 1 but not as course. Occasional or rare shell grits

(4 sherds)

3. Grog and fine to moderate shell (7 sherds)
4. Fine to moderate shell (24 sherds)
5. Dense shell (1 sherd)
6. Course shell (19 sherds)

5.2.3 Forms

No profiles can be reconstructed but there are rim forms present that derive from both bipartite jars and round-shouldered bowls (Fig 11,nos. 1-3 and 7). There are two corrugated wall sherds, in black ware (fabric 2) and are highly burnished (Fig 11, nos. 4 and 5).

5.2.4 Discussion

Some of the pottery from the enclosure ditch may be transitional from the middle Iron Age into the late Iron Age (LIA) period, but it is not known if there was earlier activity in the vicinity of the enclosure. Continuity from earlier occupation occurs on LIA sites in this region of Northamptonshire at Aldwincle (Jackson 1977), Moulton Park (Williams 1974), Hardingstone (Woods 1968), Weekley (Jackson and Dix 1986-7), and significantly at Clay Lane in Earls Barton parish (Windell 1983, and level 3 archive by P. Aird).

5.2.5 It may be important that the enclosure under discussion appears to date to the early "Belgic" period. Any further excavation would reveal more of this rare type of pottery. Enclosures dating to this phase have been excavated at Weekley and it is possible that they were used by new people moving into the area from the south.

5.2.6 The best examples of early Belgic pottery from the region come from an excavated ditch at Rushden (Woods and Hastings 1984). Other examples have been found during excavations at Aldwincle and Weekley, and during gravel quarrying at Titchmarsh (unpublished in Northampton museum).

5.3 Late Iron Age-early Roman

5.3.1 There are only nine sherds from gully (7) but there are no Roman sherds. A sherd decorated with stab marks and combing (Fig 11, no. 6) can be paralleled at Aldwincle (Jackson 1977 fig 14, 72) and Moulton Park (Williams 1974 fig 16, 78) in assemblages of this period.

5.3.2 The 235 sherds (11702g) of pottery recovered from pit 3 are most likely to date to a period from the middle to late 1st century AD. There are seven rolled or square rims in the assemblage from large storage jars, and many of the associated body sherds are likely to be derived from the same vessels (Fig 12 No 8-11 and Fig 13 No 12). Pottery from these vessels is generally in Fabric 2 (described above) and constitutes over 80% of the assemblage from the pit; the sherds mostly have orange-brown surfaces. Only about 8% of the pottery from the pit contains shell. Other types in this assemblage include a cordoned bowl (Fig 13 No 14) and two necked, round shoulded bowls (Fig 13 No 13 and 15); plus a small amount of combed ware. There are no channel-rim jars and a sherd of samian may be intrusive.

5.3.3 Discussion

10.1 The rims from the large jars from pit 3 can be paralleled on the kiln site at Weekley (Jackson and Dix 1986-7, fig 21) and it is a reasonable assumption that the pottery was made in a nearby kiln probably in the area of the enclosure. A quantity of flaked sherds, or sherds with spalling supports this hypothesis. Other kiln sites in the region producing pottery at this time include those at Hardingstone. Other later Belgic to early Roman sites are found for example at Quinton (Friendship-Taylor 1974 and 1979) and Bozeat (Northamptonshire Archaeology 1997).

6. ROMAN POTTERY compiled by Rob Atkins, identifications by Dennis Jackson and Tora Hylton

6.4.1 The evaluation produced a small group of abraded Roman pottery with a date range spanning the mid-late first to third or fourth centuries. In total there are 105 individual sherds weighing 2133g, much of it derived from a series of pits and ditches. Pits and ditches with greywares were recovered in trench 1, although these contained residual LIA-early Roman sherds in fabrics 2-4 and 6. The remainder of the Roman pottery (31-33) was from features in trench 3.

Table 1 Pottery from Roman Features by number and weight (g)

FABRIC	CONTEXT NUMBER										
	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	31	32	33
Fabric 2				5/88	3/ 32	4/45	2/63				
Fabric 3		7/82		2/8							
Fabric 4		20/443	2/13		6/91		1/44				
Fabric 6								1/6			
Greyware		43/654	4/81	1/6	7/366		3/15	13/87	10/78	7/461	
Grog-tempered ware									3/77		
Nene Valley CC									1/15		1/31
Nene Valley Self Coloured Ware										4/62	
Oxidised Ware									2/14		
Samian	1/25	1/50									
Shell-gritted									3/37		
Whiteware											1/74
Total	1/25	71/1229	6/94	7/102	16/489	4/45	3/122	14/93	19/221	11/523	2/105

6.4.2 The assemblage comprises locally produced and imported table, kitchen and storage wares. Local greywares predominate, together with smaller quantities of shell-gritted ware, colour coated and self coloured wares manufactured in the Nene Valley.

6.4.3 Greyware forms include, necked and neckless jars, dishes with plain rims (Fig 13,no 17), a flanged bowl. Decorative techniques include, acute lattice, grooves and rouletting. Other forms include, a rim sherd from a flagon in a fine sandy oxidised and a small number of undiagnostic body sherds from the Nene Valley which dated to the third and fourth centuries.

6.4.4 Imported wares are represented by two sherds of Samian, a footring and a rim sherd from a Type 37 hemispherical bowl with plain bead rim (Webster 1996, fig 32), which dates from AD 70 to the late second century.

6.5 Illustrated Vessels

Fig 11

1: Bipartite jar from enclosure ditch (27), layer (24)

2: Round shouldered bowl from enclosure ditch (27), layer (22)

3: Bipartite jar from enclosure ditch (27), layer (23)

4: Corrugated wall sherds from enclosure ditch (27), layer (23)

5: Corrugated wall sherd from enclosure ditch (27), layer (23)

6: Decorated sherd with stab marks and combing from enclosure ditch (16), layer (7)

7: Bipartite jar from possible gully (11)

Fig 12

8: Storage jar from pit (3)

9: Storage jar from pit (3)

10: Storage jar from pit (3)

11: Storage jar from pit (3)

Fig 13

12: Narrow necked jar from pit (3)

13: Bowl from pit (3)

14: Cordoned bowl from pit (3)

15: Bowl from pit (3)

16: Bowl from layer (2)

17: Grey ware dish with plain rim from gully (9)

7. OTHER FINDS by Tora Hylton

7.1 The evaluation produced six iron objects, a small amount of slag (234g) and a baked clay object. The iron artefacts were retrieved from gullies (4, 9 and 12). They included three nails, a split spike loop and a curved strip, possibly used for binding.

7.2 A very small amount of iron slag came three contexts in enclosure ditch (6 and 18) as well as from gully (4).

7.3 Part of a baked clay disk object was found in gully (4). It had numerous shell inclusions. It is likely to have been part of a kiln spacer though there is a possibility it was part of an oven. It is similar to other clay plates found at Blandford Avenue, Kettering and Hardwick Park, Wellingborough (Woods 1974, 278 and fig 6b, 278). These plates have been assigned as kiln spacers in the late Belgic and early Romano-British period where they may have been used to span the gaps between the fire-bars or to separate layers of pots in the oven (Swann 1982, 64-5 and Woods 1974, 278).

8. ANIMAL BONE by Karen Deighton

8.1 Method

A total of 268 animal bones and fragments (3.57kg) from eleven contexts in trench 1 of Iron Age/ Belgic and Roman date were scanned to gain an over view of the species present, bone condition and the potential for further analysis.

Table 2 Animal bone by number and weight (g)

Context	No. Fragments	Weight (g)
3	17	36
4	22	173
6	36	927
7	1	6
9	5	119
11	1	13
13	54	763
15	7	243
22	1	18
23	87	1004
24	37	268

8.2 Results

8.2.1 Preservation is good and fragmentation is fairly low with many elements identifiable to species level although some weathering and canid gnawing was seen suggesting the bone remained on the surface for a while before final burial. The bone surface condition is good enough to allow the detection of butchery marks on some specimens. 70% of the bone came from enclosure ditch (27).

8.3 Species present

8.3.1 Cursory appraisal suggests the assemblage is dominated by cattle (Bos) with smaller roughly equal amounts of sheep/goat (Ovi-Caprid) and pig(Sus). One element of horse (Equus) (1st phalanx) and two possibly roe deer were also present. The lack of wild species and the absence of birds were noted. No evidence for neonates was noted. Lower limb bones seem to dominate for all major species with some ribs, vertebra and jaws. Butchery evidence seems to suggest skinning and filleting as opposed to chopping and carcass dismemberment. Some evidence for burning was also seen.

8.4 Discussion

8.4.1 Due to the cursory nature of the analysis any conclusions are tentative and further research is needed to confirm or overturn them. The species represented are those expected from a Late Iron Age site, however at other contemporary sites the proportions of cow and sheep/goat are more equal (Robinson and Wilson 1983) with a dominance of cow being seen further into the Romano-British period.

8.4.2 The dominance of lower limbs would imply butchery waste rather than consumption waste as meat cuts tend to be located around the upper limbs. The possible presence of roe deer suggests the proximity of a woodland environment. However the dearth of other wild species could suggest either little reliance on hunting or that their carcasses were dressed off site.

8.5 Potential for analysis

8.5.1 Much of the bone could be identified to species level and exact proportions of the species present could be determined. Fusion analysis could be undertaken to give an idea of age at death and so give some insight into the nature of the animal husbandry practices. Some study of the well persevered mandibular cheek tooth rows and deciduous pre molars could be used as supplementary evidence, although at present their relative small numbers from the evaluation would call the viability of this into question. However, collection of further teeth and mandibles could result in full-scale tooth ware analysis and establish a kill off pattern for the site.

8.5.2 Analysis of the exact nature and position of the butchery evidence could be undertaken to gain an idea of butchery techniques. Body part analysis and a comparison to a Meat/utility index could be made. The spatial patterning of deposition could be studied, particularly as much of the material (i.e. 70%) was concentrated in the late Iron Age/early Belgic enclosure ditch (27). Any further faunal evidence from the site would not only render the above analyses more viable but could open the possibility of the study of changes through time and of metric analysis and animal stature.

9. ASSESSMENT OF SIEVED SAMPLES by Karen Deighton

9.1 Method

9.1.1 Two samples of soil from the Iron Age enclosure ditch were sieved with the 1mm, 3.4mm residues and flots were collected and analysed.

9.2 Results

9.2.1 Sample 1-context 18 (15 litres) Middle fill of enclosure ditch. This contained some charcoal, 70 fragments of animal bone (twelve of which were burnt) and twelve small mammal bones. Sixty-seven charred seeds/seed fragments were also recovered of these 39 were identifiable to family or species level the rest being too fragmentary or abraded. These were 3 small legumes, 3 possible rye grains (Secale cereale), 2 oat grains (Avena sativa), 1 hulled barley grain (Hordeum vulgare), 2 possible barley grains, 1 spelt wheat (Triticum spelta) grain, 1possible einkorn /spelt wheat grain, 7 indeterminate wheat grains (Triticum sp.) and 4 indeterminate cereal (Cereale sp.) grains. Six charred weed seeds were particularly well preserved; 2 fat hen (Chenopodium album) and four white campion (Melandrium album). Three uncharred seeds were also present these were considered to be intrusive and relatively modern.

9.2.2 Sample 2 –Context 15 (20 litres) lower fill of enclosure ditch. This produced some charcoal, 139 fragments of animal bone (11 of which were burnt, including a pig proximal metatarsal) a sheep/goat incisor and an amphibian bone. A large fragment of shell was also present, possibly fresh water oyster. 43 seeds /seed fragments were also present 28 of these were identifiable to family/species level. These comprised 7 oat grains (Avena sativa), 1 possible rye grain, 7 oat/rye grains ,3 indeterminate wheat (Triticum sp.) grains, 7 wheat/barley grains, 1 indeterminate cereal (Cereale indet.) grain and three small pulses.

Again weed seeds were especially well preserved these were 1 possible creeping buttercup (Ranunculus repens) and 1 self heal (Prunella vulgaris).

9.3 Discussion

9.3.1 Spelt wheat and barley were apparently common crops for the Belgic Iron Age (Robinson and Wilson 1983), rye was also common for the Iron Age, oats however were sparse between the late Bronze Age and Middle Ages (Schoch 1988).

9.3.2 The weed species present are all common arable or ruderal weeds. However, Chenopodium album can be used to make flour in times of shortage and Prunella vulgaris has medicinal uses and the leaves can be eaten. All the species are late summer ripening so could tentatively suggest late summer/autumn harvest time for the cultivated crops.

9.3.3 The apparent absence of chaff and small ratio of weeds to cereal grains could suggest a late stage in crop processing, however their presence in a ditch fill is problematic. Their presence could represent accidental spillage or waste possibly the result of cleaning out of parching ovens perhaps.

9.3.4 The presence of pulses and cereal together is again a common occurrence thoughout much of antiquity and they were apparently stored and/or grown together. The pulses not only provided a good source of protein but also acted as soil nitrogen fixers.

9.3.5 The small mammal bones seen in the samples are probably intrusive and relatively modern.

9.3.6 In conclusion, it can be said that, with the possible exception of oats the samples contained the type and range of plant remains expected for the period.

9.4 Potential for further analysis

9.4.1 The small mammal bones could be identified to species level.
Some of the larger charcoal fragments could be identified to family/species level to give some idea of local woodland conditions and the exploitation of timber.
Both samples contained fairly large numbers of cereal grains with moderate preservation allowing substantial numbers to be identified to family/species level. This would seem to suggest the viability of further sampling to expand the numbers and range of ecofacts and

contexts and allow for quantitative analysis and possibly the study of changes through time and of spatial patterning and so gain a clearer understanding of site economy and its dynamics.

9.4.2 The good preservation of the weed species could suggest the possibility of the analysis of crop heights, planting and harvesting times and of the local environment if enough evidence were accumulated.

10. CONCLUSIONS

10.2 The desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and trial excavation have proved very successful in assessing the archaeology within the proposed development area. The evaluation has shown that the archaeology is confined to the northern half of the proposed development area (c.105m by 55m) with the southern half barren of archaeological remains. A small area along the extreme west of the development area may have been quarried away in the early 20th century but the exact position of the quarry edge is unknown.

10.3 The trial excavation has shown that the archaeological remains survive at only c.0.2m below the present ground level. This is due to truncation in recent years with the removal of most of the topsoil and the laying of a cobbled surface for a caravan holding park. There seems to be the remnant of topsoil and so this truncation does not seem to have caused much damage to the site. Up until the change of use to a caravan park the site seems to have been part of the medieval strip farming for Earls Barton and then later as a larger field. In the trial trenches only found a single possible posthole and so it is unknown if only the larger negative features have survived this farming.

10.4 Two main historic periods are represented: probable continuous domestic occupation from the late Iron Age, through the Belgic period into the early Roman period in the north of the site and Roman remains of the third/fourth century AD on the east side. It seems likely that the archaeology in the development area is part of a much bigger archaeological landscape since Iron Age features and Roman pottery was found in a pipe trench in 1974, nearly 100m to the north of the development area.

10.5 The recovery of a plan of a rectangular enclosure in the geophysical survey on the north of the site may provide an indication of the form of settlement though with a date range possibly starting in the middle Iron Age and extending to the late Roman periods one

would probably expect changes in settlement layout. The Earls Barton site is probably located within a broader Iron Age and Roman landscape, perhaps similar to the extensive systems identified in cropmarks at Sywell (Parry, Atkins and Masters 1999).

10.6 Within the proposed development site the first main period is the late Iron Age to early Belgic, a period which is not common in the county. The evaluation has shown that artifacts, together with animal bones and botanic remains are reasonably well represented within the limits of the trial excavation. The presence of flaked or spalled sherds of pottery together with a possible kiln spacer may imply the presence of a late Belgic kiln. The significance of the Roman gullies and pits in trench 3 is difficult to access.

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7. MAPS (Mentioned in text)

1838 Inclosure Map NRO MAP 2886
Ordnance Survey map, 1st edition 1884 (Map NRO 123)
Ordnance Survey map, 2nd edition 1901 6-inch XXXIX 13
Ordnance Survey map, 2nd edition 1901 25-inch XXXIX 13
Ordnance Survey map, 3rd edition 1926 6-inch XXXIX SW

SCHEDULE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig 13 Pottery at 1:4

SCHEDULE OF TABLES

Project Manager:	Steve Parry MA MIFA
Desk-Based Study text:	Rob Atkins BSocSc DipArch
Geophysical Survey text:	Peter Masters BA HND PIFA
Trial Excavation text:	Rob Atkins
Illustrations:	Mark Roughley MA (plans, sections and pottery), Rob Atkins and Peter Masters (mapinfo)
Geophysical fieldwork:	Ian Fisher BA and Peter Masters
Trench fieldwork:	Rob Atkins, Simon Carlyle-Lancaster BA MSc, Ian Fisher, Rob Smith and Peter Ashley
Iron Age and Belgic pottery:	Dennis Jackson FSA
Other Finds:	Tora Hylton
Animal bone and seeds:	Karen Deighton BA MSc

Northamptonshire Archaeology
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Environment Directorate

17th April 2000

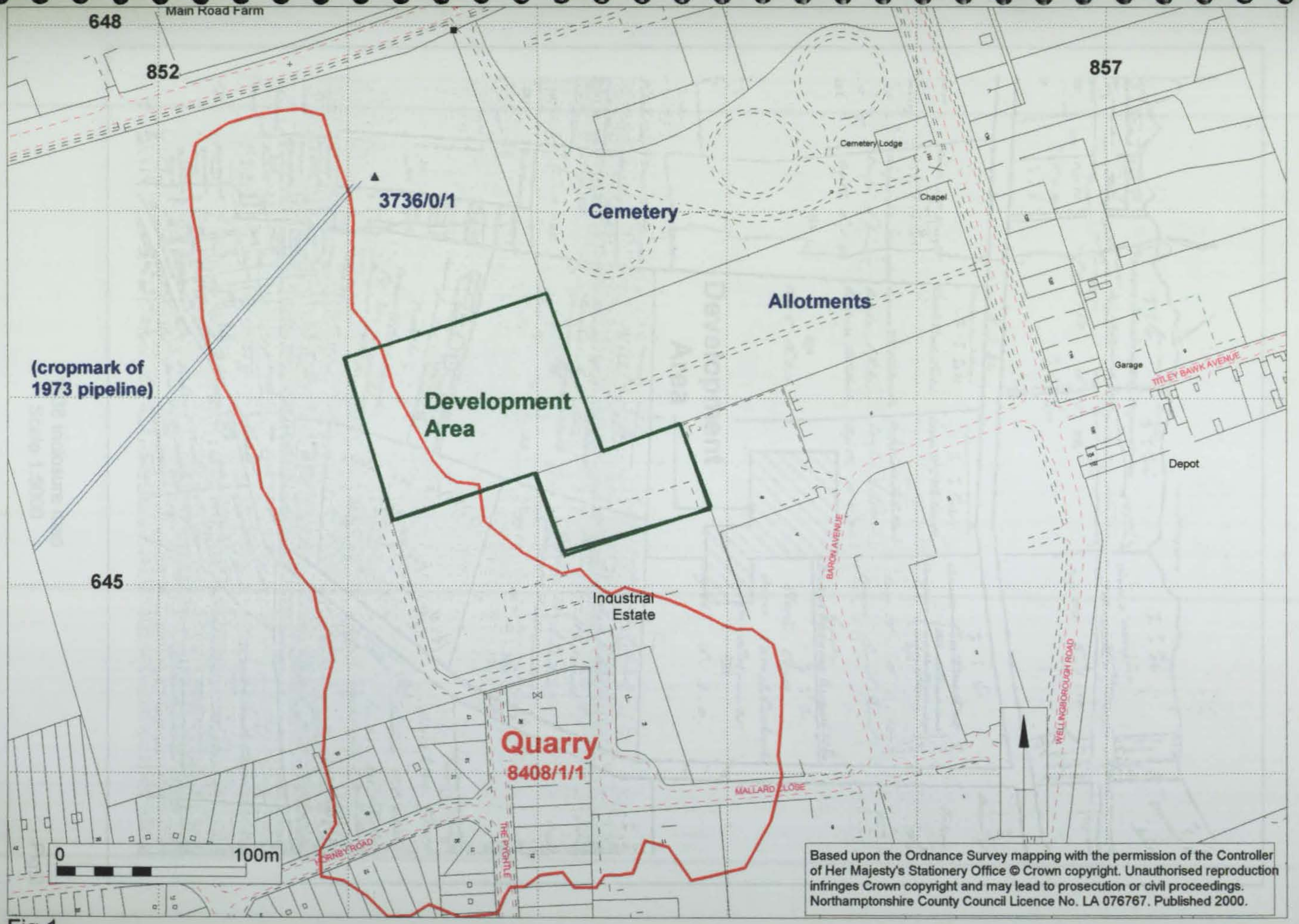
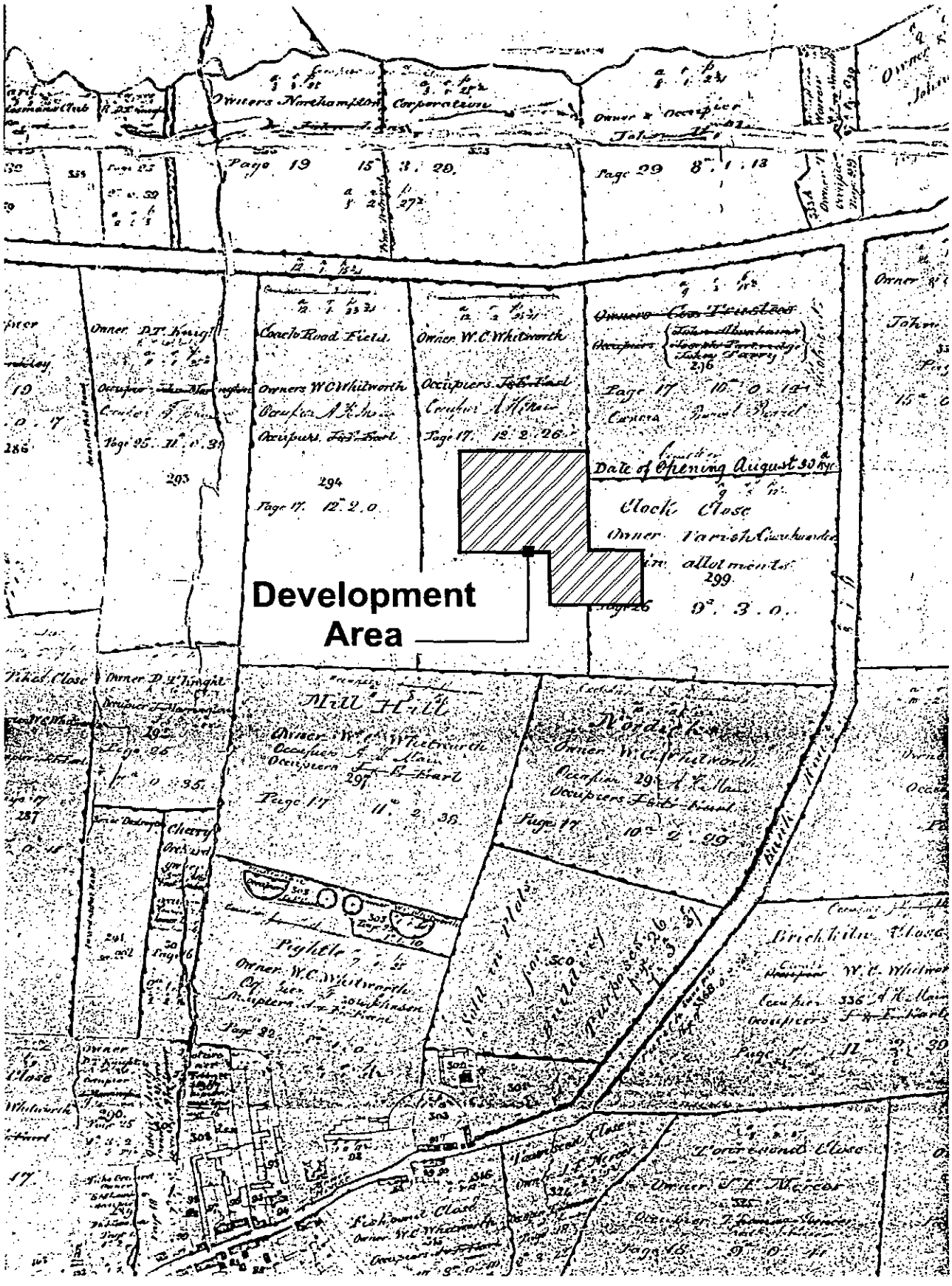
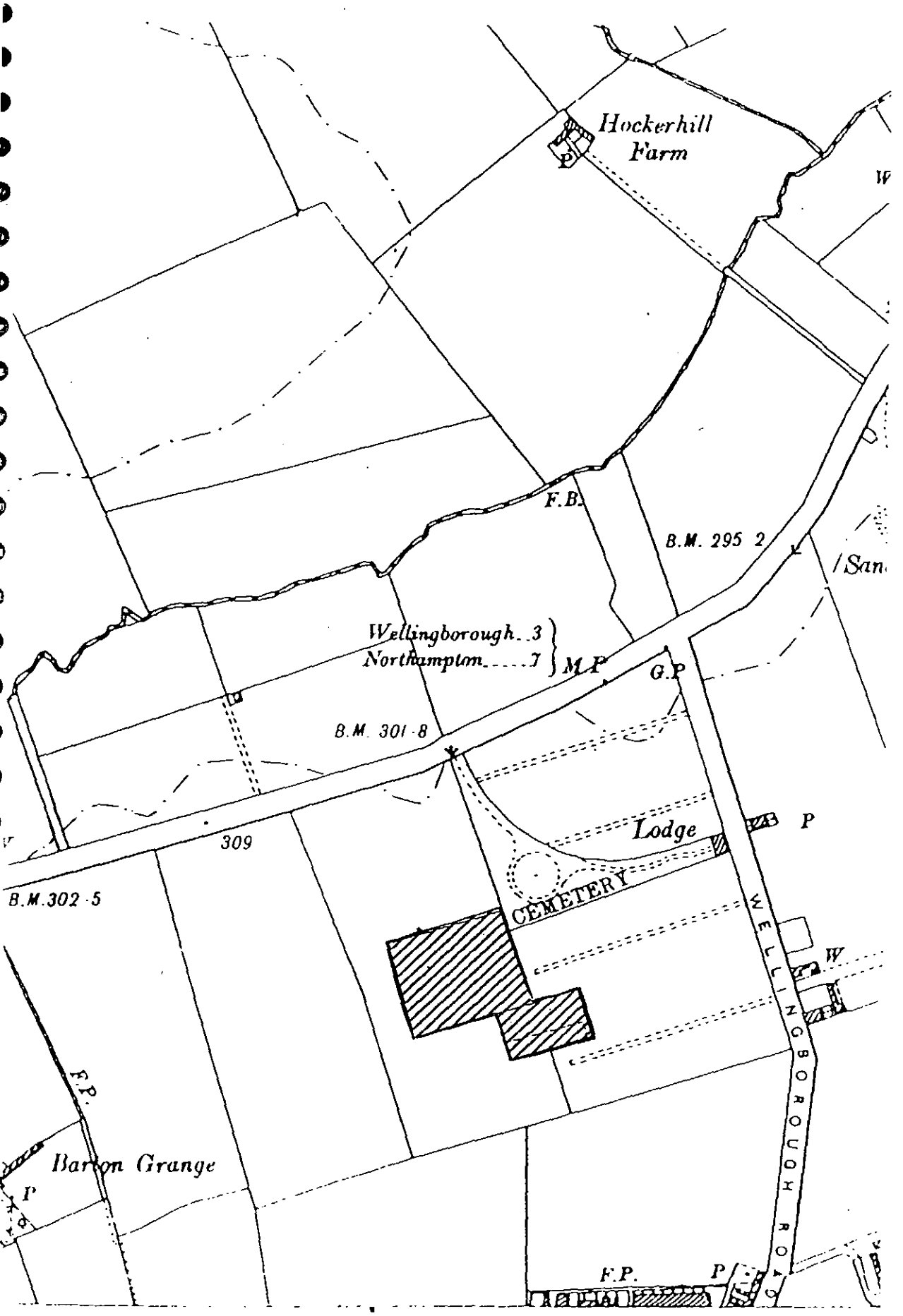


Fig 1



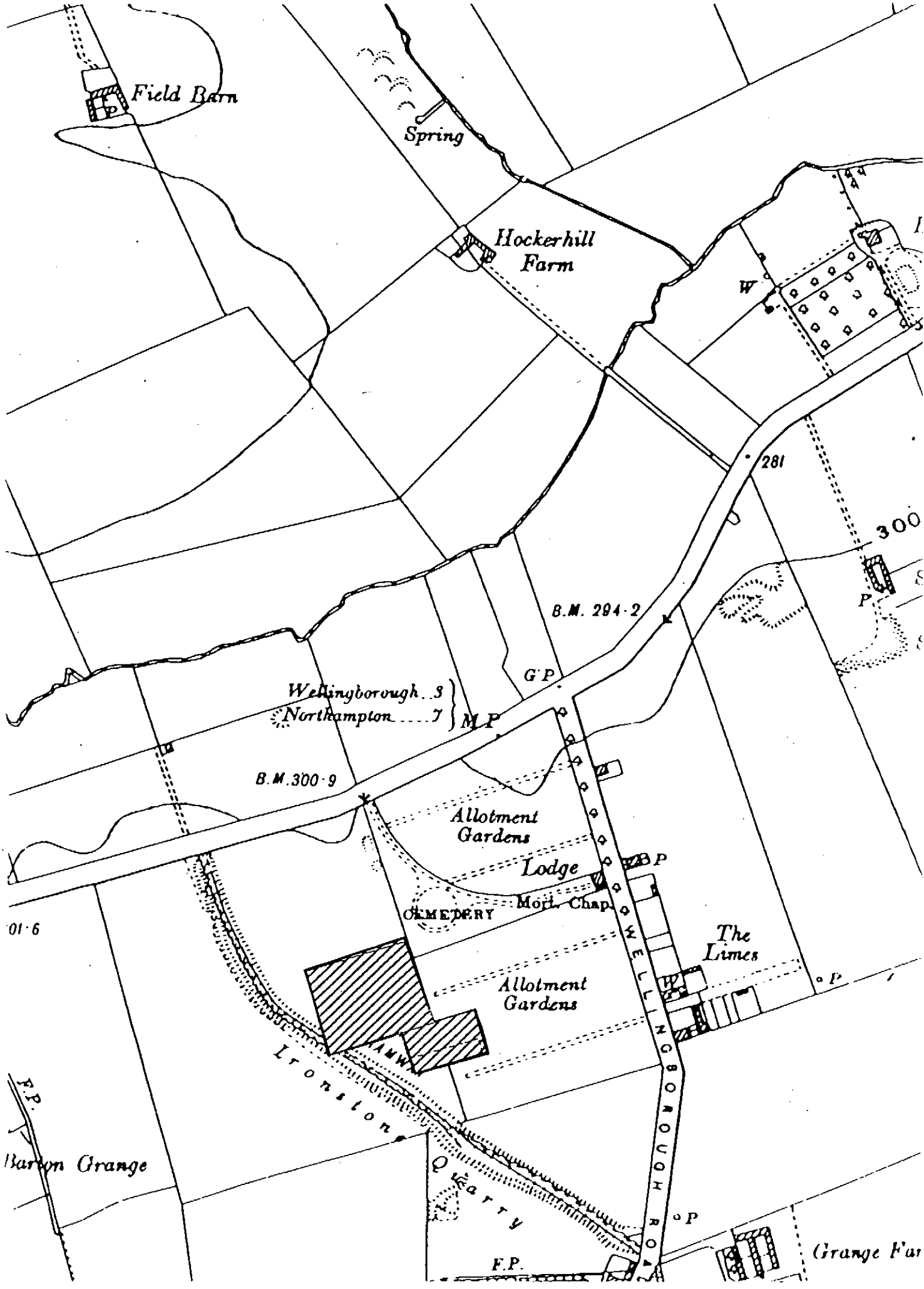
1838 Inclosure map
Scale 1:5000

Fig.2



1901 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Northamptonshire 6-inch map sheet XXXIX SW at 1:5000

Fig 3



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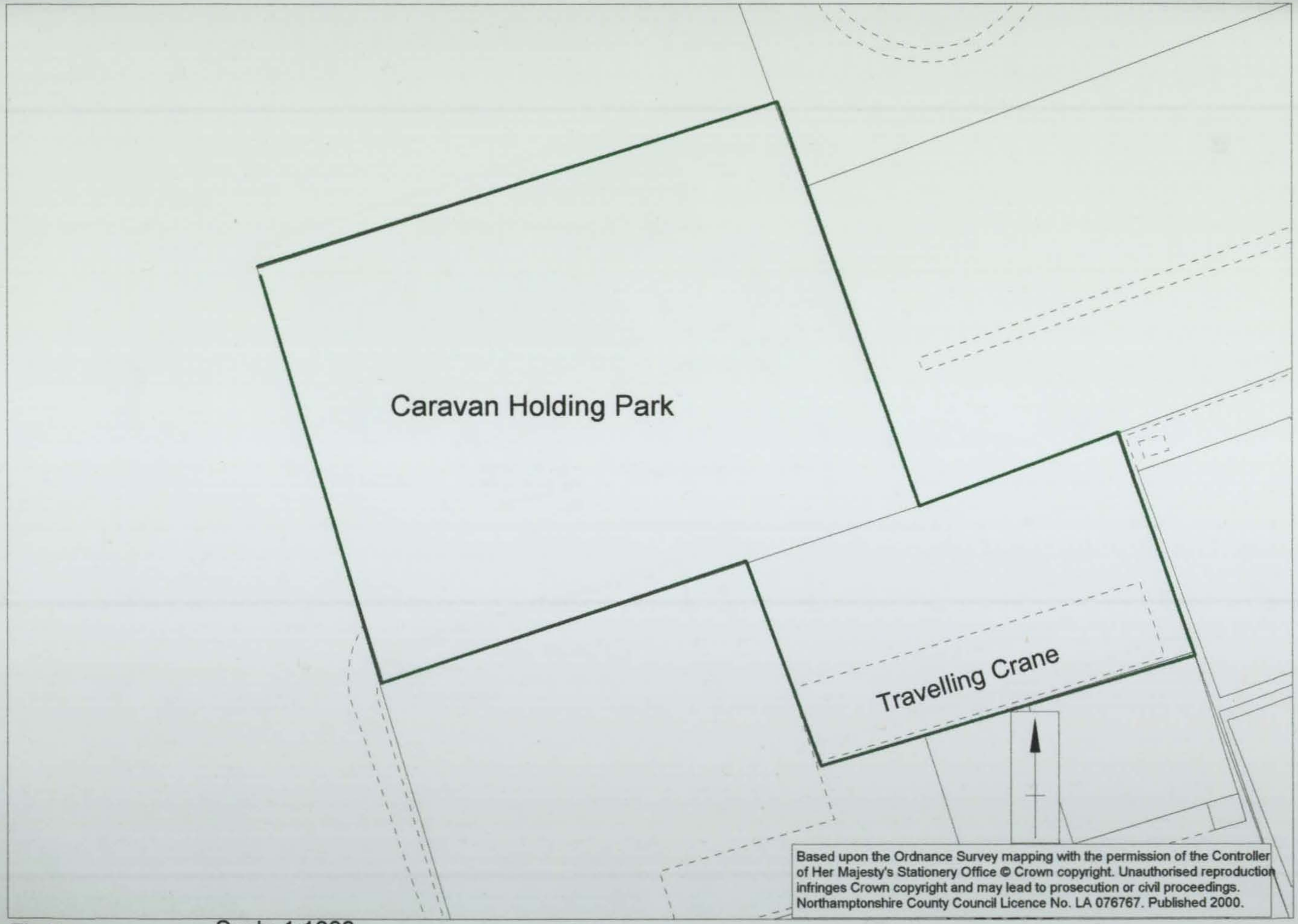


Fig 5 Scale 1:1000

Fig 6 Scale 1:1000

Fig. 7

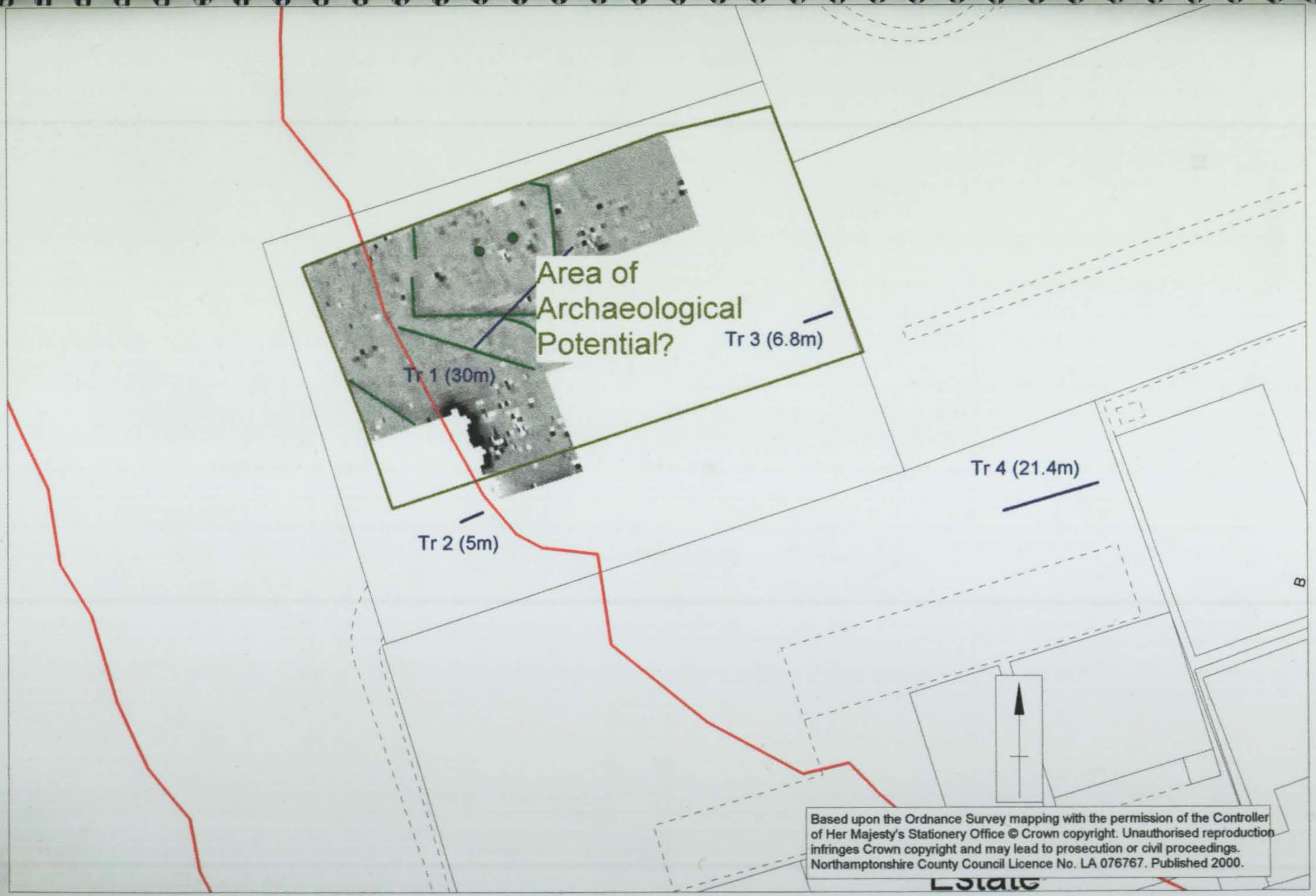
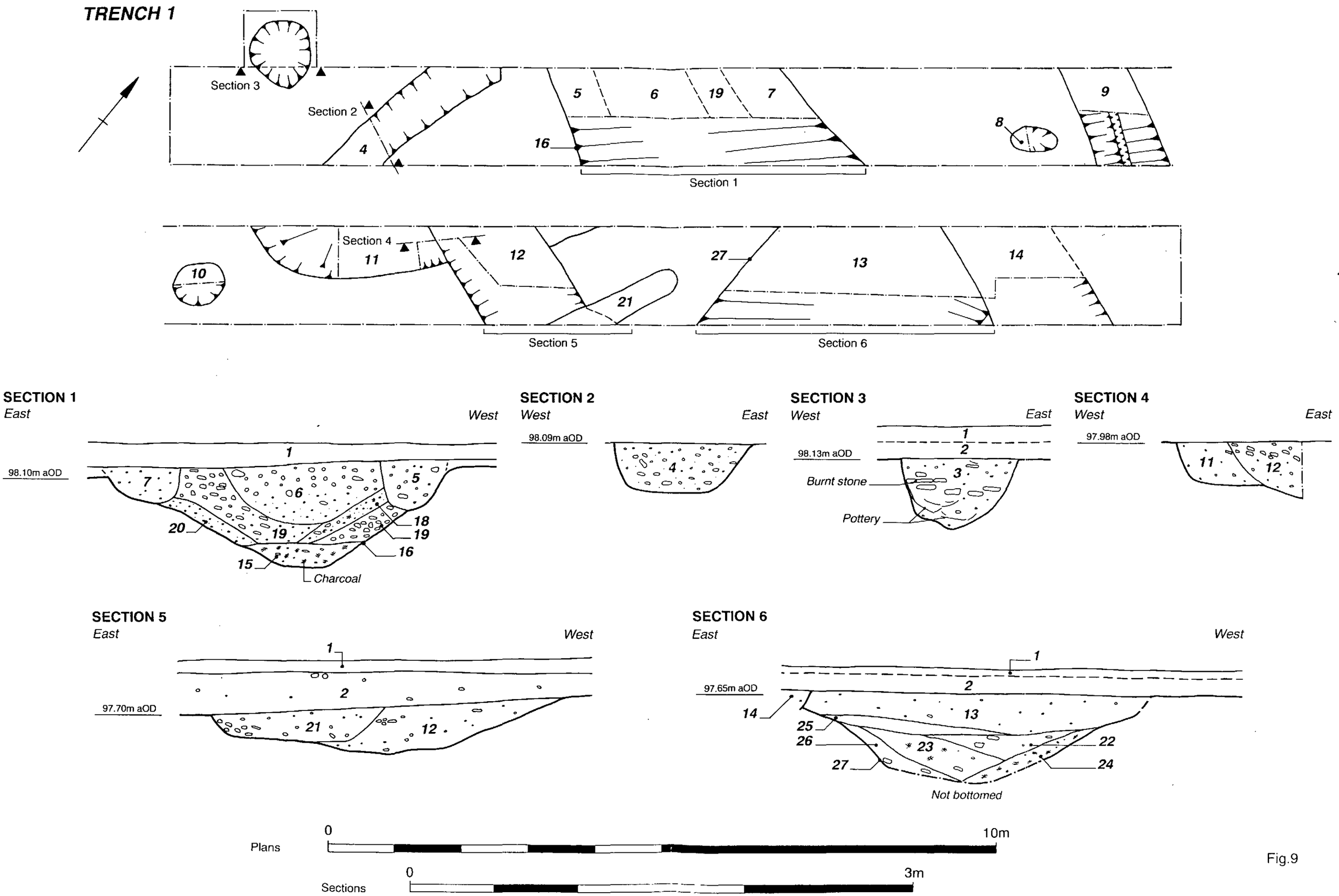


Fig 8 Scale 1:1000


TRENCH 1
Section 3
Section 2
4
5
6
19
7
16
8
9
Section 1
Section 4
11
10
12
21
27
13
14
Section 5
Section 6
SECTION 1
East
West
98.10m aOD
1
7
6
5
20
19
18
19
16
15
Charcoal
SECTION 2
West
98.09m aOD
4
SECTION 3
East
West
98.13m aOD
1
2
3
Burnt stone
Pottery
SECTION 4
East
West
97.98m aOD
11
12
SECTION 5
East
West
97.70m aOD
1
2
21
12
SECTION 6
East
West
97.65m aOD
1
2
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14
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26
27
23
22
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Plans
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10m
Sections
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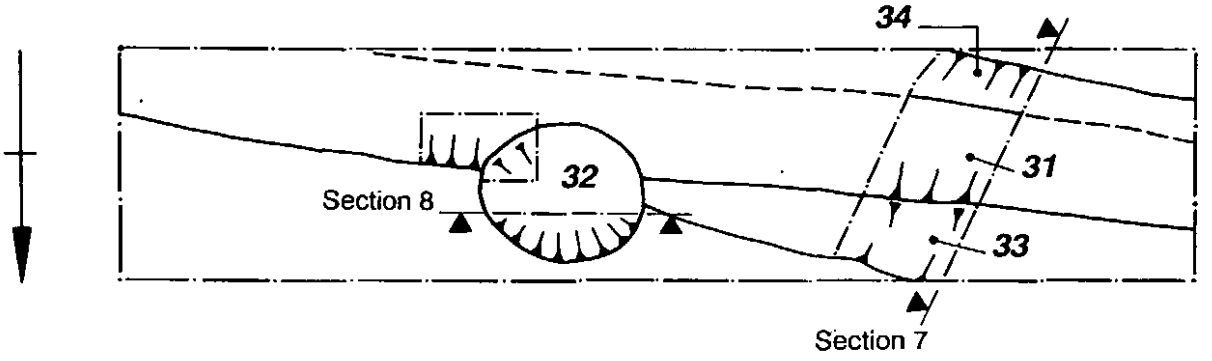
3m

Fig.9

TRENCH 3



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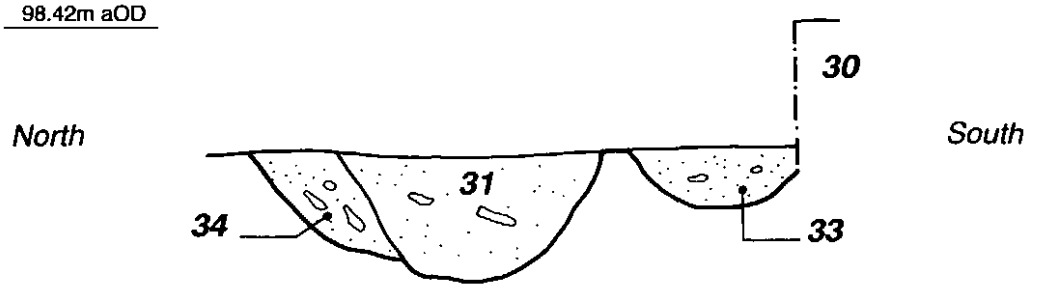

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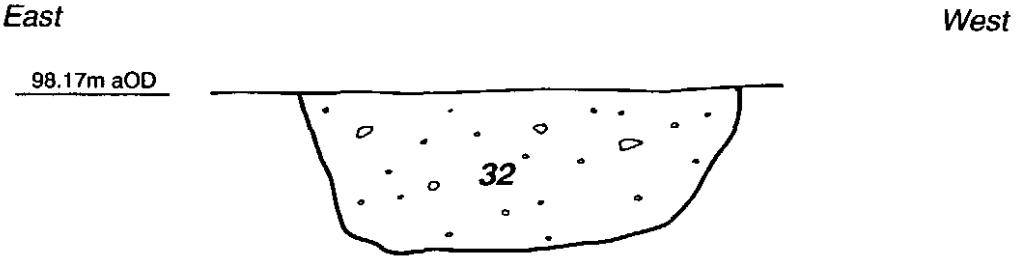

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Sections 0 3m

Fig.10

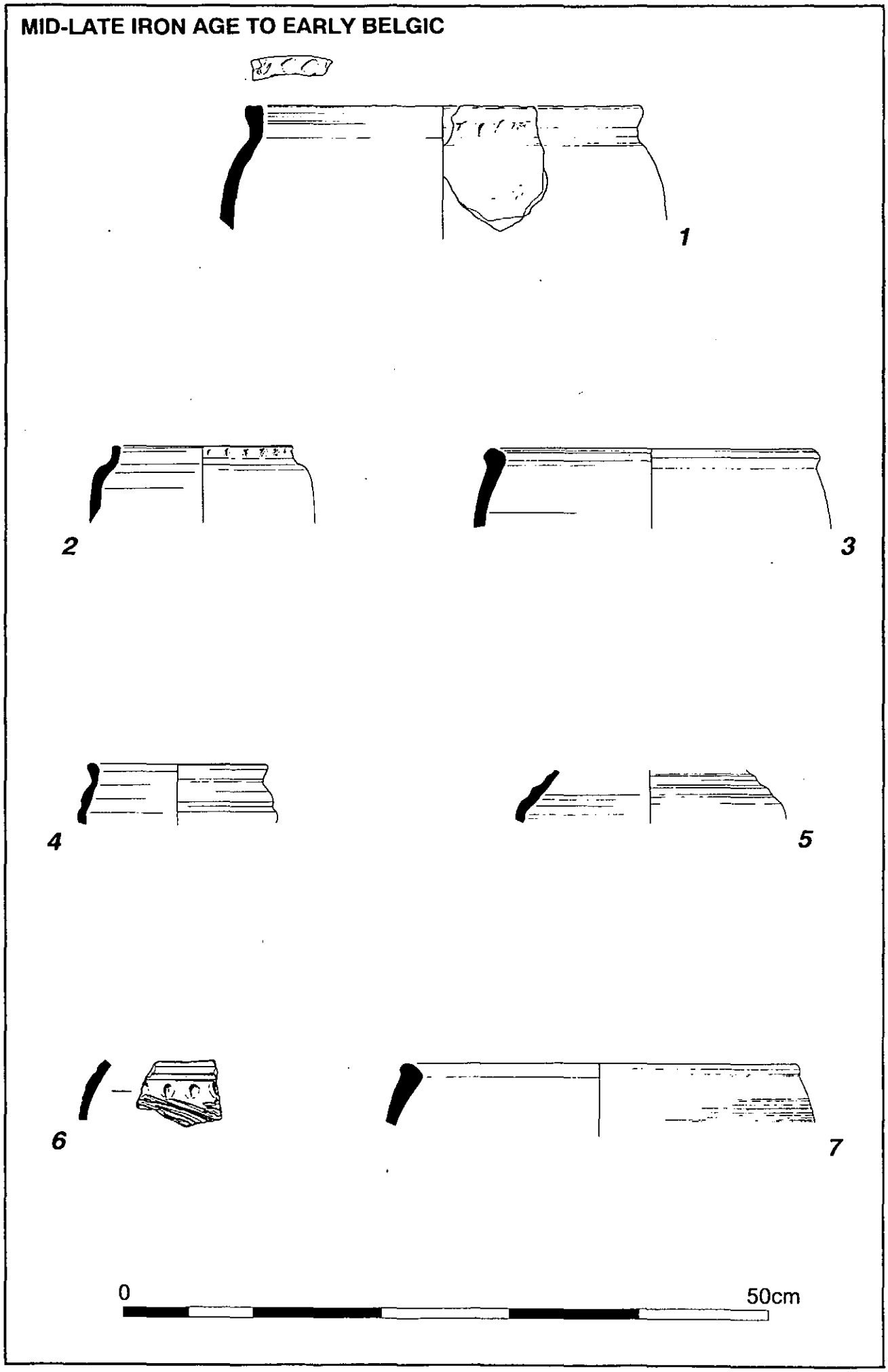
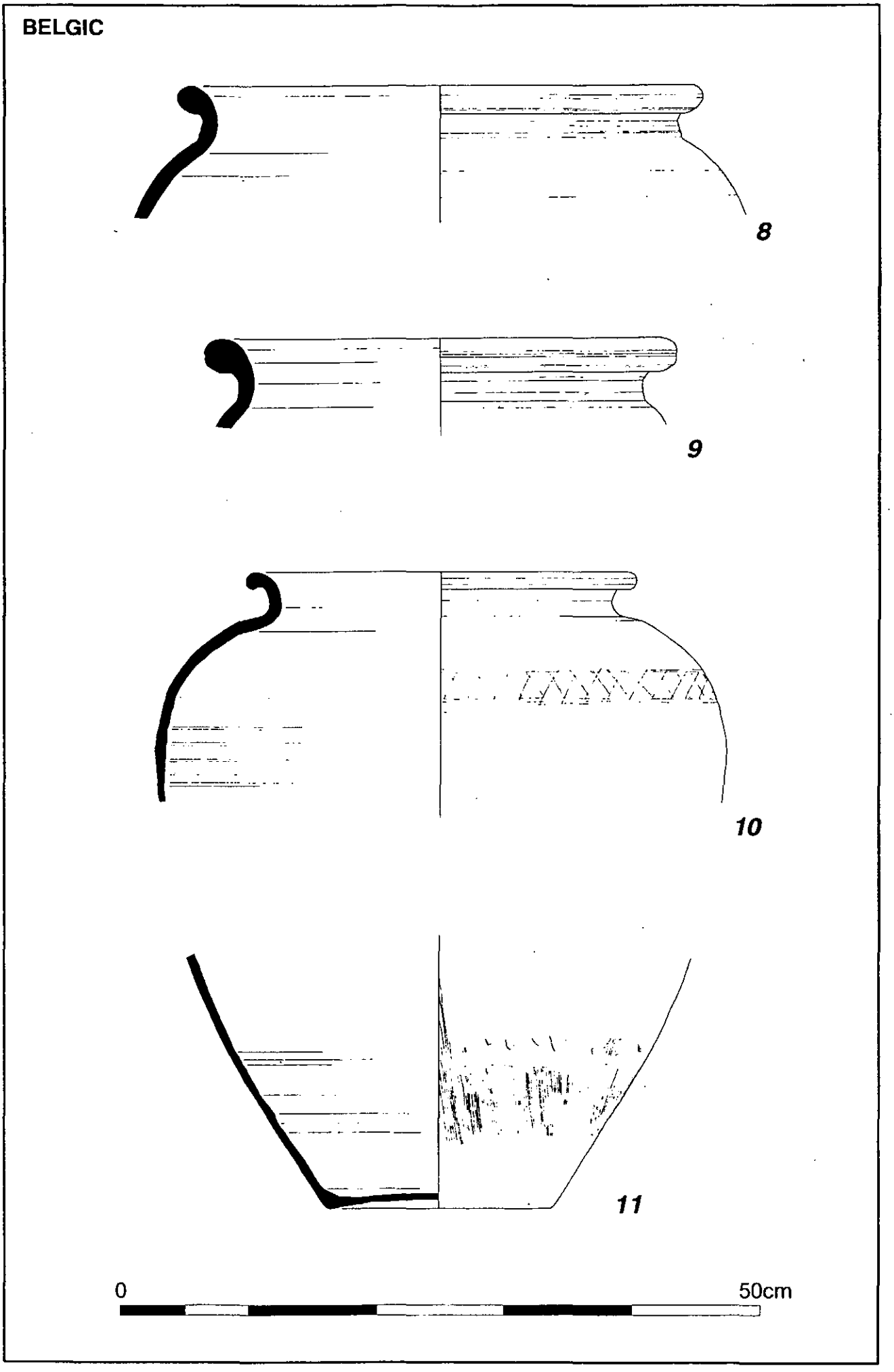


Fig.11



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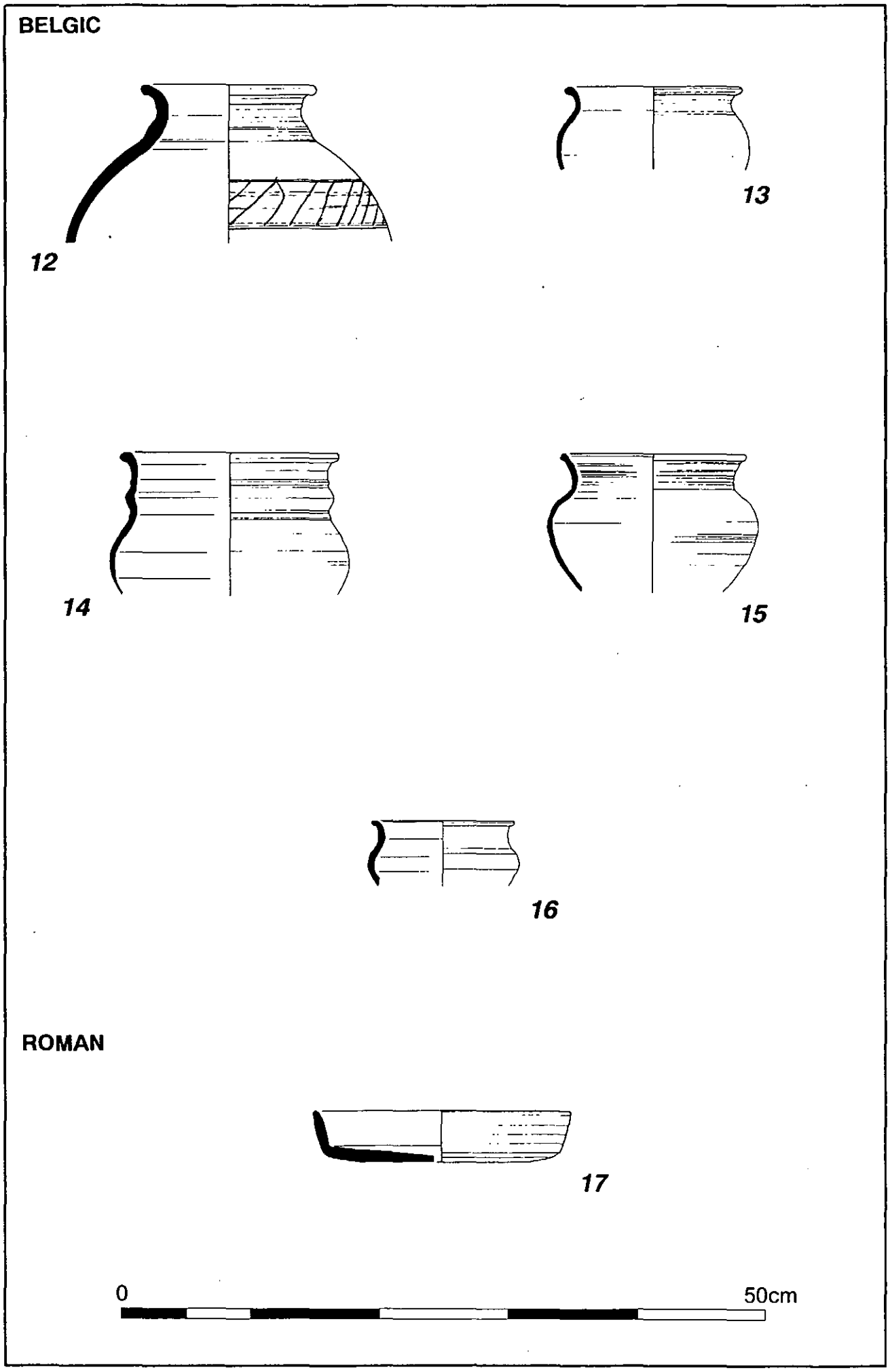

Fig.13

Author **Atkins R.** Date **2000**

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