



Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Billing Brook Road Northampton, Northamptonshire July - August 2019

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OASIS REPORT

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort1-365835	
Project name	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Billing Brook Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire, July - August 2019		
Short description	MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Northampton Partnership Homes to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land by Billing Brook Road, Northampton ahead of a proposed housing development. The resulting excavations revealed numerous land drains and disturbed ground resulting from nearby construction works and modern landscaping activities. No archaeological finds or features were identified.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Site status	None		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Pasture		
Future work	Not known		
Monument type/ period	N/A		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Billing Brook Road, Northampton		
Study area	c0.6ha		
OS Easting & Northing	SP 7936 6431		
Height OD	c88m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA		
Project brief originator	Lesley-Ann Mather, County Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council		
Project design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Paul Sharrock (MOLA)		
Project Manager	Paul Thompson (MOLA)		
Sponsor or funding body	Northampton Partnership Homes		
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Abstract

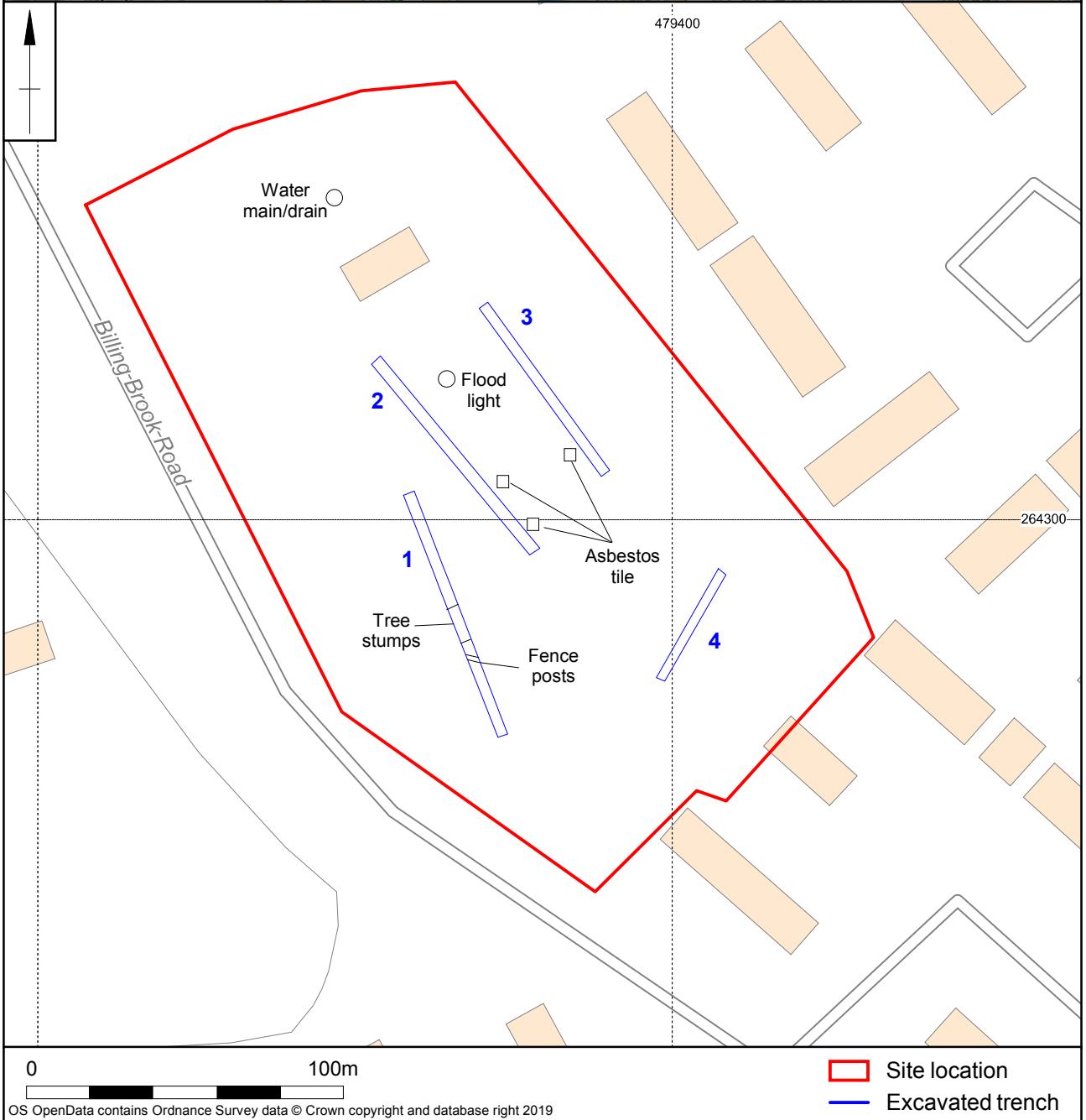
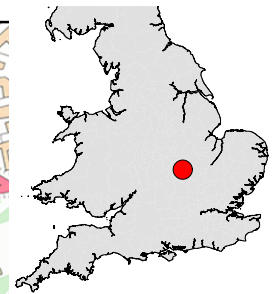
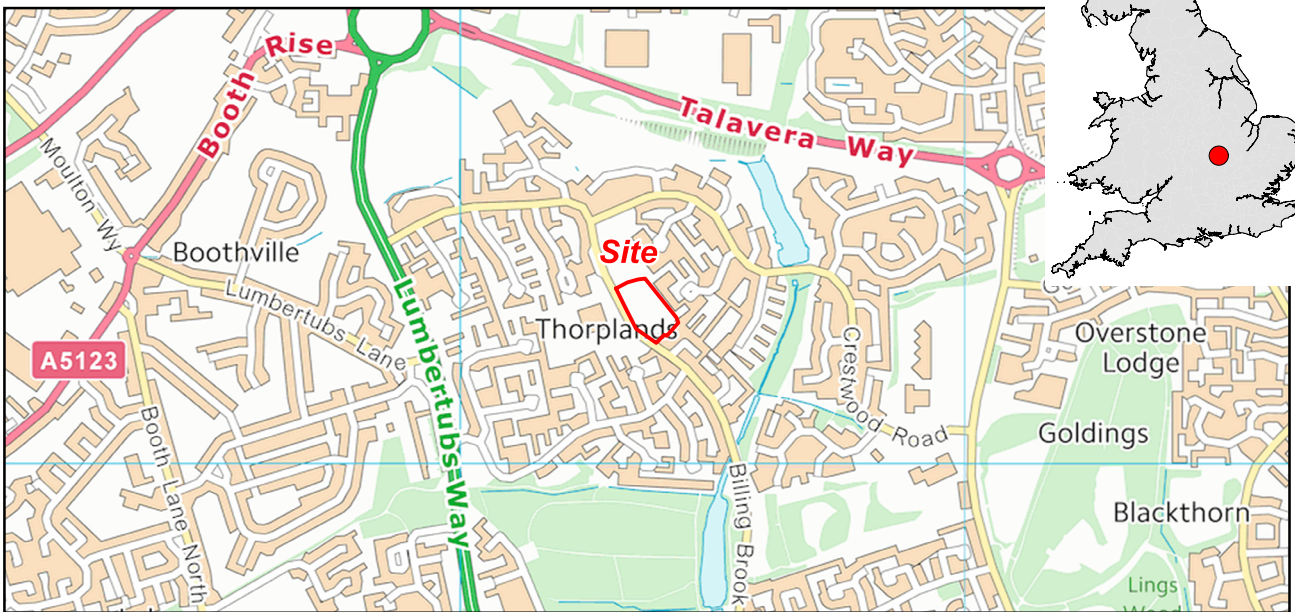
MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Northampton Partnership Homes to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land by Billing Brook Road, Northampton ahead of a proposed housing development. The resulting excavations revealed numerous land drains and disturbed ground resulting from nearby construction works and modern landscaping activities. No archaeological finds or features were identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Northampton Partnership Homes to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on a proposed development site at Billing Brook Road, Northampton (NGR 479362 264313, Fig 1).

The works were carried out in accordance with requirements from the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Advisor (NCCAA, Mather 2019), in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MCHLG 2019) and were compliant with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI, MOLA 2019).

MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) registered organisation. The Project Design for the fieldwork and the subsequent programme of works were prepared in accordance with the best archaeological practice as defined in the Chartered Institute for Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a), and *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2014b), as well as the Historic England's procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (HE 2015).



2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, topography and geology

The site comprises a small area of grassland in the north-eastern ward of Northampton, Talavera Ward. The site is partially covered with trees including what must be quite an aged oak. Located within a housing estate, it is bound to the east and south by residential properties, further green space to the north and Billing Brook Road to the west with Thorplands Primary School immediately beyond.

The topography of the study area is gently undulating with small mounds and hollows formed by felled trees and small bushes. A substantial incline is present, with the ground surface lying at c86m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the south and increasing to c89-90m aOD in the north and west respectively.

The geology of the study area is mapped by the British Geological Survey as being ironstone and Ooidal sedimentary bedrock of the Northampton Sands Formation (BGS 2019). There are no recorded superficial deposits and with the close proximity of large urban developments, these upper deposits, if present, are likely to exhibit signs of modern disturbance.

A borehole survey conducted prior to this phase of works determined that the natural bedrocks lay at a depth of between 0.8m and 0.3m from the surface. With evidence of disturbance only detected within one borehole, requiring a depth of 2.35m to reach the natural substrate (Waterman 2019).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background (Fig 2 and 3)

The following historic and archaeological background was drawn from a search of the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER), for a 1km radius around the site, undertaken 16/07/2019.

Prehistoric

Unstratified prehistoric worked flints (MNN248) including a scraper and core were found at SP 7930 6440. A fragment of polished stone axe (MNN25117) was found in 1979 at SP 789 645 and purchased by Northampton Museum. Before 1954 a Bronze Age flint scraper and other worked flint tools were recovered (MNN25118) at SP 7873 6465. More worked flints (MNN28318) have been found at SP 785 646.

Finds recovered from SP 7980 6480 in September 1970 comprise three flint scrapers and six flint flakes and these were possibly Bronze Age in date (MNN25146).

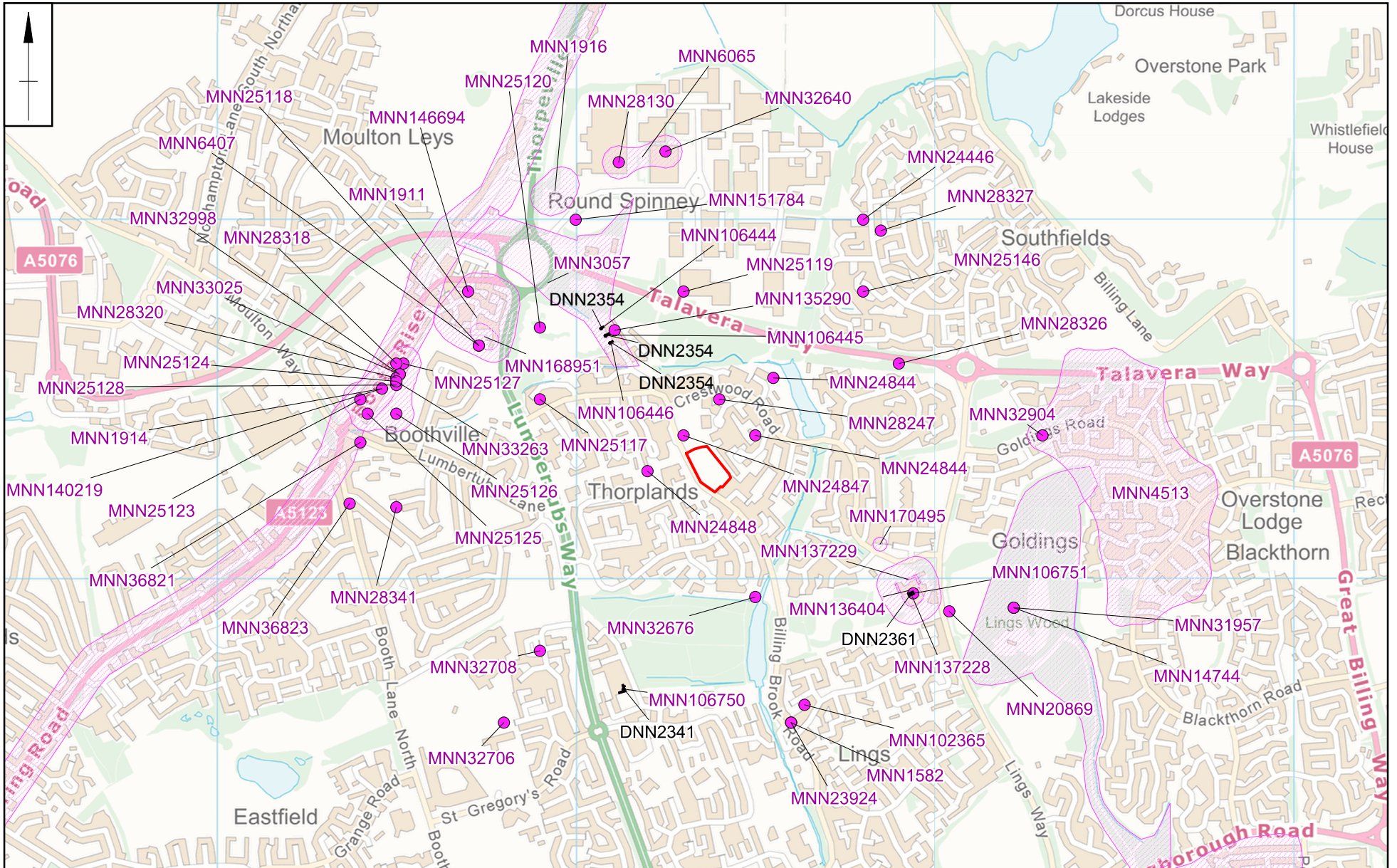
Unstratified finds comprising a leaf-shaped arrowhead, two worked flints and a small quantity of Roman pottery sherds (MNN244) were found at SP 7980 6500 within the 1km radius HER search area. An unstratified prehistoric barbed and tanged arrowhead (MNN208) was found in September 1973 at SP 8004 6391. A Bronze Age flint scraper and other prehistoric worked flints were uncovered in an excavation and through fieldwalking (MNN6407) at Booth Rise, Northampton. They could indicate prehistoric activity in the area predating the Iron Age and Roman occupation further south.

Unstratified prehistoric flints and Roman pottery (MNN32640) have been recovered from fieldwalking in 1971 at SP 7925 6519. Further unstratified prehistoric worked flints (MNN32706) have been found at SP 7880 6360 in 1970.

Aerial survey in 1963 located a possible prehistoric or Roman settlement in Thorplands centred on SP 79185 65175 (MNN6065).

Scale 1:15000 (A4)

Historic and Environment Record (HER) Fig 2
Monuments and Listed buildings data



The HER records at Booth Rise record a late Iron Age to late Roman settlement (MNN1914).

Another Iron Age to Roman settlement (MNN4513) within the 1km search area has been revealed north of Lings Wood. Iron Age pottery worked flints and Roman enclosures have been recovered by aerial photographic survey and confirmed through fieldwalking.

The Jurassic Way, a prehistoric routeway (MNN160137), connects north-east and south-west of Britain and entered Northamptonshire at Stamford. This was a corridor for traffic rather than a single-track road that dated from at least the early Bronze Age and may well have begun in the Neolithic. It is in the early Iron Age that it becomes clearly defined as a line of movement between Yorkshire and Somerset.

Roman

Between 1950 and 1973 unstratified finds were collected by the owner of the property 28 Booth Rise, mainly from his back garden (MNN28320). These included Roman 2nd to 4th-century pottery sherds, clay and stone roof tiles, tufa building stone, tesserae, box flue tile fragments, painted wall plaster, iron nails, a possible bone gaming piece, bronze strip, oyster shells and four Roman coins. In 1973 part of a tessellated pavement was found with chequer board pattern of red, white and brown tesserae adjoining an area of plain white tesserae (SP 7850 6456).

Unstratified Roman pottery sherds (MNN28341) were found at SP 7850 6420 and (MNN32708) at SP 7890 6380. Roman coins and part of a brooch were found on site of a presumed Roman Villa (MNN33263) at SP 7850 6455.

A probable Roman ditch (MNN32904) was observed in October 1980 containing Roman pottery sherds at SP 803 644 during a Watching Brief at Goldings Road, Northampton. A Roman coin of the Emperor Constantine (MNN32998) was found in 1947 at 'Avoca' 32 Booth Rise, Northampton. Roman pottery (MNN33025) was found at 'Uplands' next door to 32 Booth Rise. An unstratified Roman coin (MNN102365) was found in a garden in 1983 at SP 7963 6364 and had been issued between AD 335 to 341.

Fieldwalking by David Hall (MNN25119) recovered a few Roman and Iron Age pottery fragments from SP 7930 6480 during 1970 and 1971. A Samian sherd (MNN25120) was found at SP 789 647 in 1972 and sherds of Roman pottery were found on the west side of Booth Rise before 1938 (MNN25123).

In 1938 part of a tessellated Roman mosaic pavement, pot sherds, a triangular hone and four coins including one of Emperor Honorius (MNN25124) were found in the back garden of 26 Booth Rise, Northampton, SP 7850 6455. Between 1954 and 1955 a pottery assemblage (MNN25125) dating from the 1st to 4th century as well as possible Iron Age and Belgic pottery sherds and two coins were found in the garden of 8 Booth Rise at SP7842 6446.

A quarry behind No. 2 to No. 32 Booth Rise, Northampton (MNN25126) in 1961 revealed an assemblage comprising Iron Age, Belgic and Roman pottery sherds, the latter included Samian, Nene Valley Ware, Grey Ware and Mortarium. An unstratified coin of Victorinus was found in the garden at 38 Booth Rise (MNN25127) in 1954 - 1955. In 1977 limestone tessera and possible ironstone wall foundations were found in the back garden of 24 Booth Rise along with tile fragments and a human skull (above the wall foundation) (MNN25128) at SP 7850 6454.

A late Iron Age and Roman Settlement was located at Booth Rise (MNN1911) and investigated ahead of development. The earliest activity comprised a small number of late Iron Age pits, some of which had been backfilled with large amounts of limestone. At least one pit may have been for a substantial building foundation. In the early 1st

century AD a series of boundary ditches, enclosures and a trackway were laid out which were maintained and modified throughout the 1st century AD. There was a reorganisation of features in the late 1st or early 2nd century to a more rectilinear plan. A kiln and an inhumation with grave goods were found in one of the enclosures. During the early to mid-2nd century settlement activity contracted and shifted to the north-east. There was no identifiable settlement on the site after the end of the 2nd century.

A Roman settlement indicated by ditches and one or two circular buildings was identified at Thorplands (MNN1916) which was excavated in 1970 and 1974. Occupation spanned 2nd to 4th century. A large quantity of prehistoric flints was also found.

A former Roman Villa (MNN140219) at Boothville, Northampton, SP 78460 64530 was represented by a collection of finds recovered over half a century. These remains indicate there may have been a substantial Roman building which possibly had been preceded by an Iron Age settlement. The discovery of tessellated pavement, flue tiles and painted plaster would appear to indicate an important dwelling as the artefacts were recovered over a relatively large area.

Anglo Saxon

Archaeological investigation in 2012 and 2013 identified a sunken-feature building (SFB) and possible trackway at Booth Rise (MNN168951) at SP 78746 64675. This building is likely to have been part of a wider settlement lying beyond the excavation area. The building was sub-square measuring roughly 3m by 3m and 0.45m deep. It had two opposing postholes, centrally positioned in the east and west sides of the feature. Pottery dated to the early 6th century was found in one of the postholes and from the final fill of the SFB. A linear spread of domestic debris and silt was found in a shallow hollow 25m to the north-west of the SFB and this may denote a possible trackway.

Medieval

Unstratified medieval pottery sherds (MNN28247) were found at SP 7940 6450 and (MNN32676) at SP7950 6395. A medieval plough headland (MNN28326) was recorded from an aerial survey at SP 7990 6460.

A conical lead weight, a small copper-alloy plate with multiple pierced holes (possibly a strainer) and a copper-alloy pin with looped head (MNN146694) were found between June and September 2001 at SP 780 640 by metal detector.

Post-medieval and modern

The Portable Antiquities Scheme records a copy of a silver half-crown of Charles I (1625-1649), a French medieval jetton, another jetton dated 1350-1400 and a Nuremberg 'Rechen Meister' type post-medieval Jetton being found by metal detector before 2008 near 'Round Spinney', Overstone.

A racecourse (MNN14744) was constructed at Billing Lings in the late 18th century by Lord Cavendish. It was re-designed by Elwes.

Great Billing Hall Park (MNN2754), dating from at least the early 19th century, covered much of the land to the north-west of Great Billing village up to the Billing cross roads and westwards to Billing Brook. A tributary stream flowing into the Billing Brook was shown on an early plan running south-westward from a pond on the north side of Wellingborough Road. There is no indication that Lings Wood was included within the parkland at this time.

A possible further landscaped park lies at Thorplands centred on SP 79090 64907 (MNN3057) dating between 1750 and 1970 AD.

A post-medieval stone lined well and wooden pumpstick was found at Thorplands (MNN248) identified through excavation. The well was made of local sandstone and consisted of 30 courses. It was dug through broken sandstone into underlying blue clay. The base was 3.92m below current ground level. The position of the well suggests water supply for animals.

Listed buildings within the search zone of 1km surrounding the development site includes Billing Arbours Farmhouse (List Entry Number. 1189862, DNN2341 and MNN106750), a Grade II Listed Building of early to mid-19th century on Lumbertubs Lane. Lodge Farmhouse (DNN2361 and MNN106751) is a Grade II Listed Building at Billings Lings is also early 19th-century in date.

No. 1 (MNN106444), 2 (MNN106445) and 3 (MNN106446) Thorpland Farm Cottages (DNN2354) are Grade II Listed Buildings (List Entry Number. 1293433) and date to the early to mid-19th century; hexagonal buildings in red brick. Thorplands Farm (MNN135290) is 19th to 20th century. Billing Lodge Farm, now demolished, (MNN136404) and its garden (MNN137228) at SP 79928 63969, Billing Lings, Northampton dated to around 1750 AD with a slightly later range of farm buildings (MNN137229).

Map regression from Ordnance Survey maps (earliest being 1885) shows land use for the site as agricultural farm land only. Thorplands Farm is shown approximately 400m north-east of the site.

On the 1952 Ordnance Survey edition map an old quarry is marked approximately 800m west of the site. During the construction of Billing Brook Road highway between 1967 and 1971 the embankment along the western boundary of the site was constructed (Waterman 2019). The 1975 edition OS map shows Thorplands Estate having been built including Thorplands Primary School.

A small 3m x 5m structure was noted on 2018 Google Street View map however, this is no longer present. Two manholes still exist in the vicinity of this former building (Waterman 2019).

The World War Two road block at Buttocks Booth (MNN36821 and MNN36823) at SP 7840 6438 and SP 7837 6421 was one of the road blocks constructed by the County Council in mid-July 1940 on behalf of the South Midlands Area Command on a site approved by the C.R.E. Oxford District. The road was not permanently blocked but could be closed quickly in an emergency to protect the nearby steelworks. This was one of 17 road block locations set up around Northampton in 1940. This Buttocks Booth site consisted of four road blocks, which were strengthened in mid 1941. With the designation of Northampton as a Nodal Point in September 1941 and the creation of Defended Localities in the town, this road block was abandoned, and its components used to reinforce other defences.

Northampton to Kettering Turnpike road (MNN135330) lies within the 1km search area around the development.

Undated

Cropmark activity within the 1km search area is recorded on the HER (MNN1582) as being uncertain but possibly Roman in date.

Undated indistinct rectilinear enclosures (MNN239) were located by aerial photographic survey in 1970 at SP 7960 6360.

Undated ditches (MNN248) as vague cropmarks have been recorded north of Billing Arbours in 1970. This includes a single ditch observed during development digging a drainage channel in 1971.

An undated rectilinear enclosure as cropmark was observed by Richard Hollowell during aerial survey in 1963 at SP 7925 6519 (MNN28130). This may be possibly more than one enclosure.

Uncertain cropmarks (MNN28327) have been identified at SP 7985 6497 in August 1962 by Richard Hollowell.

Previous archaeological investigation (Fig 3)

No intrusive archaeological investigation or geophysical surveys have taken place at the site.

A series of early HER records for prehistoric worked flints, Roman pottery being recovered in the area, but these lack further information (ENN8142, ENN8147, ENN8153, ENN8374 and ENN8382) and medieval pottery (ENN8375).

In 1938 at 26 Booth Rise a number of Roman finds were uncovered including part of a tessellated pavement (ENN8145). Roman pottery had been found before 1938 (ENN8144). A Roman coin was recovered in 1947 (ENN8146). Roman finds made between 1950 and 1973 at 28 Booth Rise in main part of the back garden (ENN8152).

In 1954 or 1955 a Roman coin was found through fieldwalking (ENN8148) at No.38 Booth Rise, Northampton. More finds are recorded on the HER from this fieldwork (ENN8150) and more pre-1954 (ENN8143).

Fieldwalking in 1960 identified a possible settlement of Roman date (ENN8156) at Thorplands.

Before 1961 Iron Age / Belgic pottery and Roman pottery were found in a quarry that ran behind No.2 to No.32 Booth Rise, Northampton (ENN8149). The Quarry itself (ENN8151) may be Roman as more finds are recorded on the HER.

Aerial Survey in 1962 and 1963 identified possible Prehistoric or Roman settlement (ENN8378 and ENN8381).

An unstratified Bronze Age find was made in 1970 (ENN8383). Aerial Survey in 1970 observed ditches (ENN8373) and cropmarks (ENN8366). An excavation of a Roman settlement took place during 1970 to 1974 (ENN8154). Fieldwalking also took place on this site before excavation (ENN8157). Unstratified Prehistoric flints were found at Northampton College in 1970 (ENN8136) during fieldwalking.

An undated ditch was observed during drainage work at Dairy Meadow Court in 1971 (ENN8372). An excavation at Thorplands in 1971 identified the remains of a stone-lined well dating to the post medieval period (ENN8376).

Unstratified Roman finds are recorded from 1971 (ENN8140) near Booth Rise.

In 1976 unstratified prehistoric and Roman finds were uncovered at South Lodge, Northampton (ENN8368) during building development. Prehistoric and Roman unstratified finds were recovered (ENN8555 and ENN8370) during fieldwalking in 1976 in the area.

In 1977 at 24 Booth Rise a number of finds were recovered including a human skull (ENN8139).

Unstratified prehistoric finds were recorded in 1979 (ENN8141).

During observation in 1980 at Goldings Road a Roman ditch was noted (ENN8573).

In 1983 medieval pottery was found at Billing (ENN8365). An unstratified Roman coin was found also through fieldwalking in 1983 at Wade Meadow Court (ENN100399).

During the Defence of Britain Survey in 1998 two concrete blocks used during WW2 by Home Guard for defensive road block were recorded at Buttocks Booth Road (ENN19467 and ENN19469).

In 2001 a metal detecting survey identified unstratified medieval finds (ENN107735).

Archaeological evaluation took place at the former Woodvale Primary School (ENN104676). A small undated ditch and shallow gulley were found but no artefacts were recovered.

Prior to 2008 metal detecting around Overstone parish uncovered unstratified medieval and post-medieval finds (ENN107736).

During 2012 geophysical survey took place at Booth Rise identified several possibly archaeological anomalies (ENN107720). Trial Trench Evaluation took place at Booth Rise during 2012 and 2013 by Northamptonshire Archaeology (ENN106890). No archaeology was found in the seven 20m long trenches excavated. Three smaller areas were subsequently investigated as a mitigation phase (ENN106891, ENN106892 and ENN106889). Evidence of regularly spaced pits from a former tree nursery were the only archaeological evidence found.

In 2014 an archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was undertaken at Lings Primary School, Hayeswood Road (ENN108135). No archaeological features were recorded.

Six trial trenches were excavated in March 2014 at the former Goldings Middle School (ENN108078). A modern ditch and an undated ditch were recorded. Modern areas of disturbance were noted including service trenches, geotechnical pits, test pits and landscaping. Between 2014 and 2015 archaeological observation, investigation and recording was carried out by MOLA Northampton at the former Goldings Middle School (ENN108566 and MNN170495). A small ditch of unknown date was uncovered.

In 2015 land between Booth Rise and Talavera Way was subject to Trial Trench evaluation (ENN108013). Due to constraints only three trenches were excavated, and no archaeological evidence was uncovered.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The purpose of the archaeological investigation was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any archaeology revealed within its cultural and environmental setting. In particular the objectives were to:

- mitigate the impact of the development through preservation by record;
- establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;
- establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region, and to;
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.

Specific research objectives were to be drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (Cooper 2006, updated by Knight *et al* 2012) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation. However, the absence of archaeological remains on the site prevented any research questions being addressed.

3.2 Methodology

The fieldwork comprised three 40m trenches and one 20 metre trench measuring a minimum of 1.6m wide and excavated by a JCB 3CX mechanical excavator. The positions were determined from mapping, taking into account clear obstacles such as overhanging trees and below-ground obstructions such as large concrete deposit or underground services.

The location of the trenches were surveyed and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid using a Leica Survey Grade RTK GPS operating to a 3D tolerance of +/-0.05m. During which further physical boundaries were observed resulting in the slight shortening of trench 3 and trench one being bisected, straddling a tree stump.

The trenches were excavated mechanically with a toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision down to the natural geological horizons. The topsoil and subsoils were stored separately on opposing sides of the trench ready for reinstatement after these works.

The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features with deposits, archaeological or otherwise given a unique context number following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). They were described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and any associated finds. A full photographic record comprising 16-megapixel digital images was maintained. No artefacts were recovered during the excavation.

On completion of the evaluation and following appropriate monitoring, all trenches were backfilled with their up-cast by soil type and then lightly compacted by the mechanical excavator.

The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing under accession code ENN109558, in accordance with the specific Northamptonshire archiving standard (Mather 2014), as well as with national guidelines by Walker (1990), Brown (2011), CIfA (2014c) and the MGC (1992).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was split into two halves as a result of large tree stumps positioned midway along its course. As a result, the deposits found within this area have been affected by bioturbation. The only other features encountered within this trench were a series of postholes from a modern fence; no pre-modern archaeological features were found.

The trench exhibited evidence of modern disturbance in its north-western end, with a more natural horizon present in the south-west. Due to this disturbance a sondage was excavated to determine its extent. In the sondage, the underlying natural geology was observed at a depth of c1m below the ground surface and comprised a mid-yellow-grey clay with no inclusions (106). This was overlain by a 0.25m thick layer of mid brown sandy clay, which was determined to be also of natural origin (105). Two modern episodes of dumping were present over this deposit. The earlier deposit measures 0.18m thick and comprises a loose, crumbling layer of crushed stone and sand of an orange/brown hue (104). Above this lies (103), a 0.21m thick layer of black/brown rubble akin to unbonded, but compacted, road aggregates. This appears to have leached, in places, into the underlying deposits as well as containing fragments of modern brick and wood. None of this modern debris material was retained. Above this disturbance a layer of loose, mid-brown sandy-silt containing small subangular stones was present measuring 0.15m thick (102). This was representative of a build-up of subsoil, though a modern food wrapper was recovered from this layer, which may indicate that this is not a naturally occurring deposit. Finally, the trench encountered a 0.1m thick layer of heavily root disturbed, loose, mid-dark grey/brown silty-clay topsoil (101).

The south-eastern portion of the trench only encountered c0.15m thick layer of topsoil (101) of the same consistency and a much thicker deposit of potential subsoil (102), measuring up to a thickness of 0.83m down to a natural depth of c0.98m.



Section within Trench 1 facing north-east Fig 4

4.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 measured 40m in length with a width of 1.6m. No archaeological remains were uncovered within this trench. However, root disturbance from the surrounding trees and modern debris was prevalent.

This trench had a comparatively varied depth, with the south-eastern end reaching a depth of c1m and the north-western end measuring a mere 0.45m below the ground surface. The base of the trench comprised multiple areas of differing modern dumping over a natural of medium, compact, light grey-yellow clay (207).

In the south-eastern end of the trench, a 0.85m thick deposit of medium-firm, orange-grey sandy-clay with brick, glass and plastic fabrics was encountered (206). Centrally, this changed to a deposit of loose yellow-black gravel and sand with frequent inclusions of clinker usually associated with modern road building and aggregates (205). Beyond a strip of modern building rubble, lies (204), a 0.1m thick deposit of medium, light to mid brown-yellow silty clay which partly overlay (205).

This trench did exhibit potential subsoil within its centre comprising a 0.3m thick layer of loose, mid brown sandy silt with infrequent small, subangular stone inclusions (202). The trench was overlain by a 0.1m to 0.15m thick layer of dark grey-brown silty clay loam topsoil, thoroughly root disturbed from the turf (201).

4.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 ran parallel to Trench 2 and was shortened due to vegetation lying at its north-western end, resulting in a final length of c35m. The natural horizon was encountered at a depth of c0.6m and comprised fairly compact, light grey-yellow clay (306) overlain by a 0.24m thick intermediate layer of brown-orange sandy clay (304). In the north-western end of the trench, there was a thin 0.1m band of loose brown-black sandy clay mixed with road slag and tarmac fragments (303). Over this, a 0.1m-0.16m thick band of mid-brown sandy clay was present across the entire trench (302). In the south-eastern portion of the trench, a 0.15m thick layer of yellow-grey clay was present containing fragments of brick, glass and plastics (305); none of this modern material was retained. Finally, the surface material encountered comprised 0.1m-0.14m of black powdery topsoil that had been heavily root disturbed (301).



Overview of Trench 3 Fig 5

This trench encountered several modern features comprising six land drains, crisscrossing the trench in both a north-west to south-east and north-east to south-west alignment. Post holes were also identified which related to a modern fence line.

4.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 situated at the south-eastern end of the site measured 20m in length. The section revealed a natural soil horizon comprising a natural geology of compact, light grey-yellow clay (403) overlain by a c0.25m thick, yellow-brown silty clay subsoil (402). The topsoil measured c0.15m thick, comprising dark grey-brown silty clay loam, heavily root disturbed from the turf (401). No archaeological or modern features were observed within this trench.



Overview of Trench 4 Fig 6

5 DISCUSSION

The topography of this site was visibly undulating, covered with short cropped grass and trees, creating a green space within the existing housing estate. Such an environment is unlikely not to have been affected by the surrounding developments, which this evaluation has found extensive evidence for. Trenches 1, 2 and 3, which were all located to the west and centrally within the study area, all featured signs of modern activity, either through the existence of field drains (as uncovered in trench 3) or the layers of differing rubble and modern inclusions. Trench 4, located to the south-east, was the only trench that exhibited a natural soil horizon.

In the north-western end of Trench 1 a layer of crushed limestone was identified (104), topped by a thin layer of potential road aggregates (103). This could represent the remains of a modern compound or hard standing, possibly utilised during the construction of the nearby housing estate.

Further modern detritus was uncovered in all layers within Trenches 1, 2 and 3. These layers were often distinct in appearance, clearly representing individual dumping events. This is likely resulting from the land being stripped down to natural and used as a site compound or store before being backfilled and landscaped to the condition that is seen today.

It is possible that archaeological remains could have survived the modern activity on the site as the natural geology does not look to have been excessively truncated. Therefore, the lack of archaeological remains uncovered within this study is likely due to a lack of activity as opposed to a loss of the archaeological record. Furthermore, the soil horizon encountered within Trench 4 may indicate the presence of further undisturbed ground within the site, where archaeological preservation would be much more likely.

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APPENDIX 1: TRENCH INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
1	40m x 1.6m NW - SE	479359.34; 264304.53	84.63m aOD	1.00m & 83.63m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Loose mid to dark grey-brown silty clay loam	0.10m	-
102	Subsoil	Loose mid brown sandy silt occasional small stones	0.15m	-
103	Modern dumping	Loose mixed black-brown rubble/clinker with brick wood and metal	0.21m	-
104	Modern dumping	Loose light yellow-brown sand and stone	0.18m	-
105	Modern dumping	Medium brown sandy clay	0.25m	-
106	Modern dumping	Medium yellow-grey clay	0.11m	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
2	40m x 1.6m	479353.97; 264325.85	86.66m aOD	1.00m & 85.66m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Loose mid to dark grey-brown silty clay loam	0.12m	-
202	Subsoil	Loose mid brown sandy silt occasional small stones	0.30m	-
203	Modern dumping	Loose to friable light brown-yellow sandy clay	0.35m	-
204	Modern dumping	Friable light to mid brown-yellow sandy clay	0.10m	-
205	Modern dumping	Loose mixed yellow/black gravel/sand/clinker	-	-
206	Modern dumping	Friable to firm mixed orange/grey sandy clay with brick, glass, plastic and roots	0.85m	-
207	Natural	Firm light grey-yellow clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
3	40m x 1.6m	479370.82; 264334.32	86.76m aOD	0.65m & 85.11m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
301	Topsoil	Loose mid to dark grey-brown silty clay loam	0.10m	-
302	Modern dumping	Friable mid brown sandy clay	0.15m	-
303	Modern dumping	Loose mixed brown/black sand and clinker	0.16m	-
304	Modern dumping	Friable mid brown-orange sandy clay	0.24m	-
305	Modern dumping	Friable mixed yellow-grey clay-brick, glass, plastic etc	-	-
306	Natural	Firm light grey-yellow clay	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural
4	15m x 1.6m	479407.29; 264292.31	83.83m aOD	0.49m & 83.34m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
401	Topsoil	Loose mid to dark grey-brown silty clay loam	0.15m	-
402	Subsoil	Friable mid yellow-brown sandy clay	0.34m	-
403	Natural	Friable to firm light grey-yellow clay	-	-