



**Archaeological Mitigation works
Spinney Quarry phase 1b (Part), Earls Barton
Northamptonshire
January 2014**

Site Code: EBQ 14

Report No. 14/47

Author: Jim Burke

Illustrator: James Ladocha



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molanart1-172491
Project name	Archaeological Mitigation works, Spinney Quarry Phase 1B (Part) Earls Barton, Northampton	
Short description (250 words maximum)	MOLA (formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology, was commissioned by Rathmell Archaeology, on behalf of Breedon Aggregates, to undertake a mitigation works at Spinney Quarry phase 1B (Part), Earls Barton, Northamptonshire. The works identified linear ditch that was identified in the geophysical survey (GSB 2010). Artefacts from the ditch spanned from the Roman – post-medieval period. Remains of a wall related to the existing post-medieval barn was also noted, that had formed part of a stock yard.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Mitigation	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	None	
Current Land use	Pasture	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Spinney Quarry, Earls Barton, Northampton	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	0.5ha	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	SP 84780 62470	
Height OD	50m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA	
Project brief originator	Lesley Ann Mather NCC	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Jim Burke	
Project Manager	Adam Yates	
Sponsor or funding body	Breedon Aggregates	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	22/01/14	
End date	29/01/14	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Northampton Museum (EBQ 14)	pottery
Paper	Northampton Museum (EBQ14)	Site file
Digital	Northampton Museum (EBQ 14)	Mapinfo plans, Word report
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological Mitigation works, Spinney Quarry Phase 1B (Part) Earls Barton, Northamptonshire January 2014	
Serial title & volume	14/47	
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION WORKS
SPINNEY QUARRY PHASE 1B (PART)
EARLS BARTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FEBRUARY 2014

Abstract

MOLA (formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology, was commissioned by Rathmell Archaeology, on behalf of Breedon Aggregates, to undertake a mitigation works at Spinney Quarry phase 1B (Part), Earls Barton, Northamptonshire. The works identified linear ditch that was identified in the geophysical survey (GSB 2010). Artefacts from the ditch spanned from the Roman – post-medieval period. Remains of a wall related to the existing post-medieval barn was also noted, that had formed part of a stock yard.

1 INTRODUCTION

In January Rathmell Archaeology, on behalf of Breedon Aggregates, commissioned MOLA (formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology) to undertake a programme of archaeological mitigation through a programme of Strip, Map and Record works at Spinney Quarry, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire. The 2014 works only cover a small part of the Phase 1B extraction zone, occupying approximately 0.5ha centred on NGR 484780 262470.

The works have been required as a condition on planning consent for residential development and are being undertaken in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012). The scope of the work was set out in a WSI prepared by Rathmell Archaeology (Rathmell 2010). As a variation to this the current area was treated as high importance, so comprised strip, map and record in this area, as opposed to the trial trenching originally envisaged.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

The site is located to the south of the villages of Ecton and Earls Barton, it is bounded by the A45 to its north, Grendon Road to its east pasture land and the River Nene to its south and Nene valley way footpath to its west.

The site lies at approximately 50m aOD and the ground mainly flat. The underlying geology is mapped as Marlstone Rock Formation Devensian first terrace gravels, which, across most of the site are found immediately below the subsoil. Outcrops of Upper Lias Clay have been noted at the northern margins of the area; the southern lower portions are covered with a brown clayey alluvium, as are the banks of the Ecton Brook, which flows in to the Nene from the north.

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A detailed sequence of archaeological assessment and intervention works has been undertaken in support of proposed extraction between 2002 and 2010.

These works have been conducted by Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit (Windell 1982, 1983 and 1990) and Northamptonshire Archaeology (2003 Masters & Fischer and 2003 Walsh), Albion Archaeology (2002 Edgeworth) Archaeological Solutions (2006 Newton) and GSB Prospection (2010). These excavations, alongside excavations at Clay Lane (1978-1980), revealed elements of a broad spread of Iron Age and Romano-British settlement. The range of identifiable elements suggests that this is a palimpsest of activity through this period rather than a single coherent settled landscape.

A middle Iron Age pit alignment, and middle-late Iron Age enclosures, field systems and structures were found to the west of the Clay Lane excavations, as well as extensive evidence for 2nd to 4th century AD settlement to the north of the A45. This may suggest a migration or selective continuation of settlement on higher ground during the Romano-British period – perhaps reflecting centralization and land ownership change.

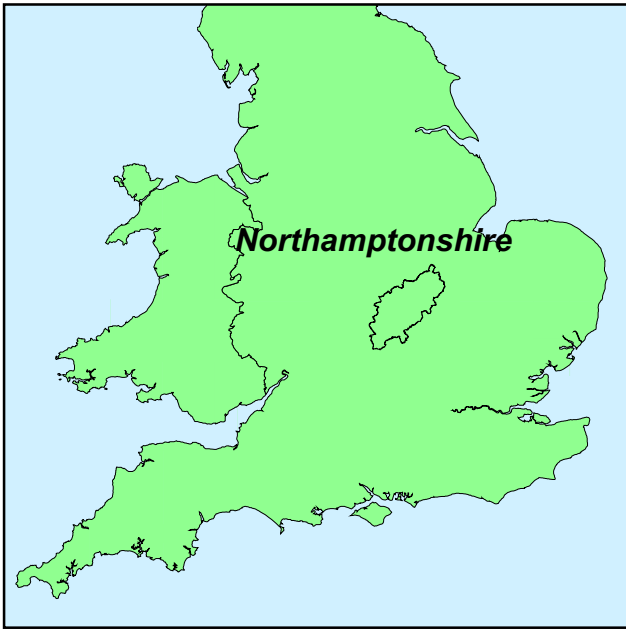
3 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. This was achieved through mitigation Strip, Map and Record.

The aim of the archaeological mitigation was:

- To determine and understand the nature, function, and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.
- To determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.
- To ascertain the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.
- To recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region.

Specific research objectives will be drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (Knight, D, Vyner, B, and Allen, C, 2012) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation. The evaluation was carried following the guidelines suggested by the IfA *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008), and the MOLA (Northampton) *Fieldwork Manual* (MOLA 2014).



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The site, a rectangular area 39m by 65m, was marked out by a representative of Breedon aggregates. The site was stripped by a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m-wide toothless ditching bucket.

The total area was excavated to reveal archaeological remains or, where these were absent, undisturbed natural horizons. All works were monitored by an archaeologist. The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological direction to reveal natural substrate.

The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately at the edge of the excavated area.

The area was surveyed using a Leica System 1200 Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$

Recording followed standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). The site where archaeological features were present was planned at a scale of 1:50, the sections and profiles through features were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Levels were related to the Ordnance Datum.

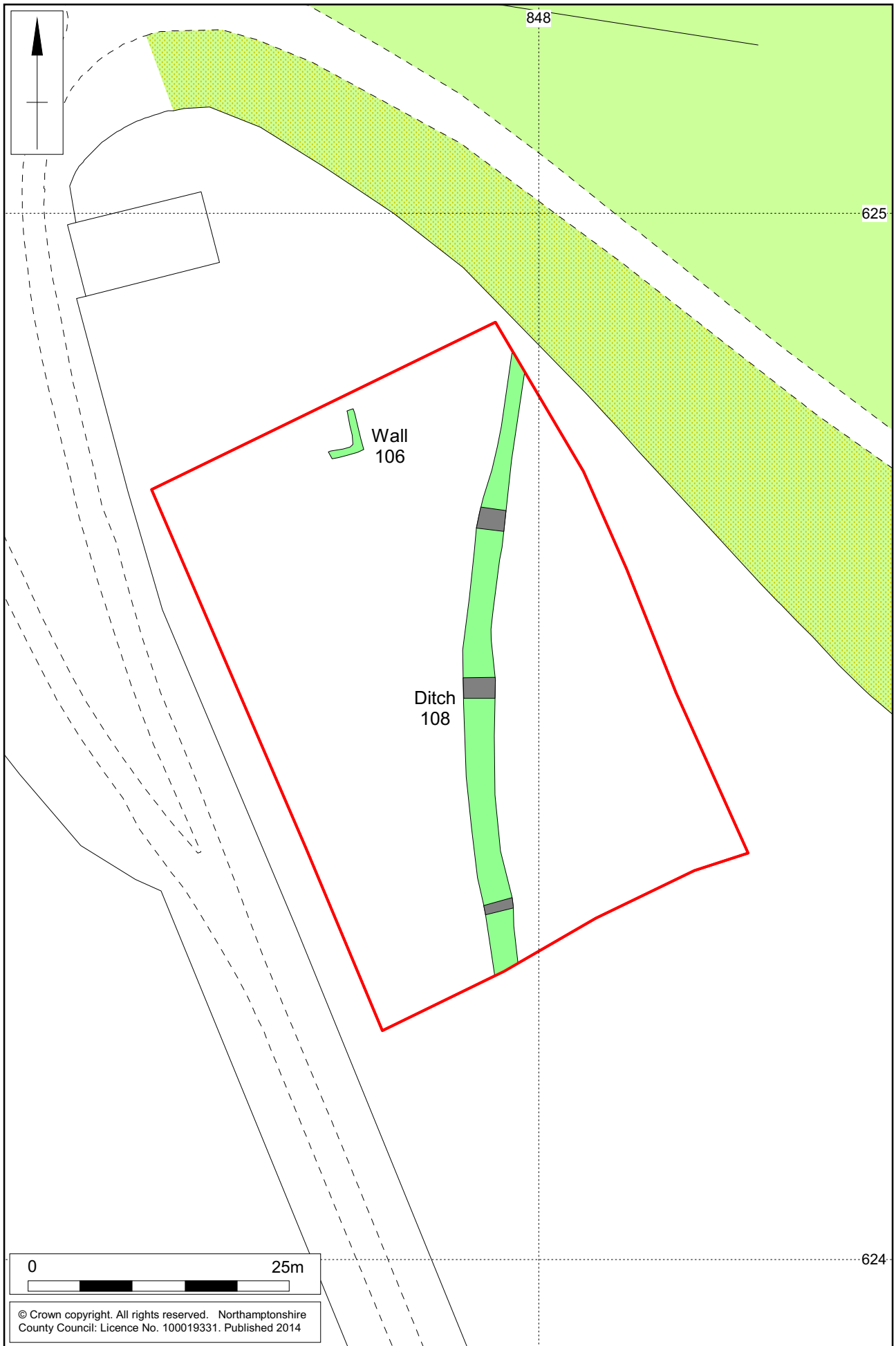
Artefacts were collected from archaeological deposits but unstratified bone and modern material was not retained. Photographs were taken as 35mm monochrome negatives and digital photos. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned by metal detector.

The evaluation conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised Oct 2008). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with English Heritage, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (EH 2006).



General view of site prior to excavation, looking north

Fig 2



Scale 1: 500

Excavated area Fig 3

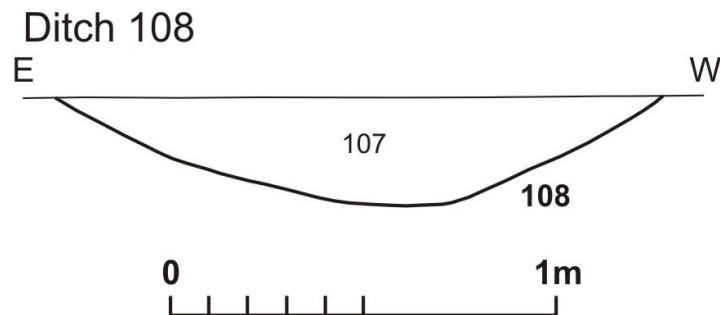
5 EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The ditch [106], as originally identified in the geophysical survey, was gently curving with the northern end aligned north-north-east and the southern end on a southerly alignment (Figs 3, 4 and 5). It was 1.60-2.70m wide by 0.28-0.30m deep, with gently curving sides and a broad base. The fill (107) was of mid greyish-brown sandy silty clay with frequent gravel throughout. It contained Roman tile and post-medieval pottery, along with animal bone fragments from juvenile cattle. Metal detecting along the ditch produced modern metals, including drinks cans, wire, screws and nails (not retained).



Ditch [108], looking west

Fig 4



Section of ditch [108]

Fig 5

At the northern end of the site there was an L-shaped length of wall [106], forming the corner of stone building (Fig 3, 6 and 7). The wall was constructed of Northamptonshire ironstone, bonded with a coarse sandy mortar containing pea gravel and flint, it extended 3.9m north-south and 3.1m east-west.

The wall was cleaned but due to the presence of modern disturbance, which included asbestos, no further work was carried out.

The wall is part of old stock yard that was part of the current disused barn; as recorded on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map. The construction of the wall is similar to the construction of the barn (Figs 2 and 8) the yard and barn can be seen on the overlay of the current site and first edition Ordnance Survey 1885 (Fig 9)



Wall [106], looking south-east

Fig 6

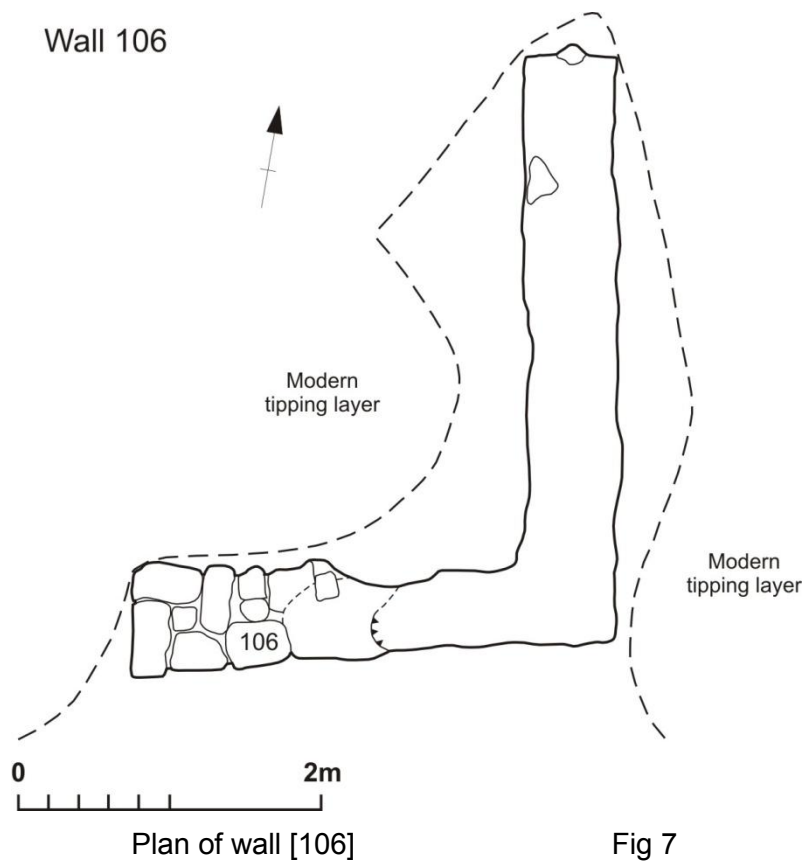


Fig 7



Wall of current barn, looking west

Fig 8

6 THE FINDS

6.1 Roman ceramic tile by Pat Chapman

Three abraded tile sherds come from the fill (107) of ditch [108]. One abraded tile sherd, weighing 30g, at least 15mm thick and made from a fine silty orange and black fabric, possibly a leached shellyware, with occasional grog inclusions. Two sherds, weighing 140g, at least 15mm and 18mm thick, are made in hard sandy orange clay. These are residual fragments of Roman roof tile, which would not be unusual given the proximity of Romano-British settlement in this area.

6.2 Post-medieval pottery by Tora Hylton

A single sherd of unglazed earthenware, weighing 4g, in a coarse orange fabric was recovered from the fill (107) of ditch [108]. The sherd is undiagnostic but of post-medieval date and may originate from a flowerpot or a field drain.

6.3 The animal bone by Adam Reid

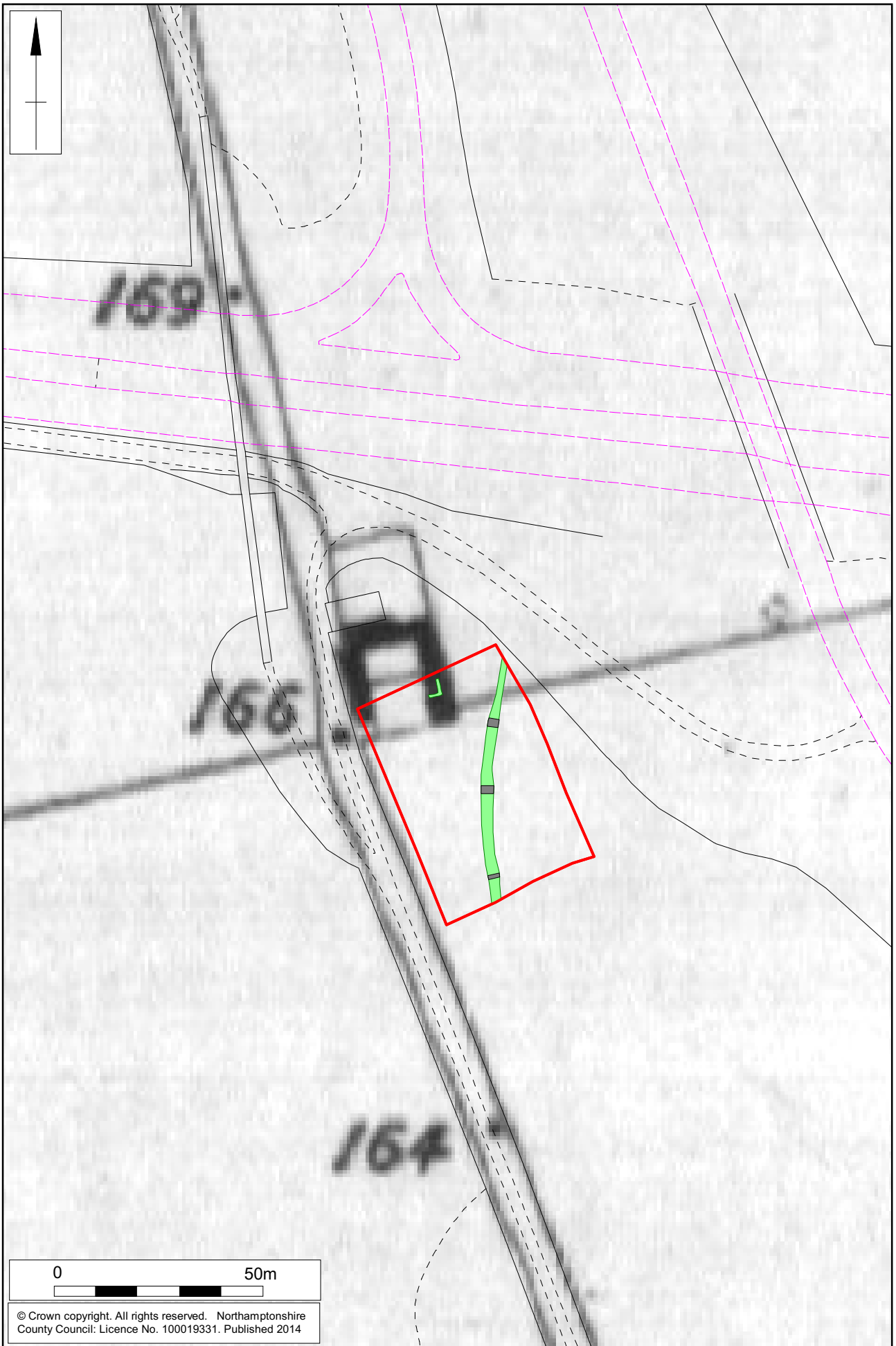
A total of 252g of animal bone was recovered by hand from one context during the course of excavation. The material consisted of two specimens, identified as a cattle metatarsal and a cattle radius. Both specimens originated from feature [108], which contained post-medieval pottery. The specimens were incomplete, but were moderately well preserved despite some evidence of surface abrasion. No evidence of butchery or gnawing can be recognised. Unfortunately the faunal evidence adds little to the understanding of the site other than to say that cattle may have been utilised there. However, the presence of identifiable bone in moderately good condition may indicate the potential for future faunal analysis, should further work take place.

Table 1: The taxa present and elements identified

fill /cut type	Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)
107/108 Ditch	2 (<i>Metatarsal, Radius</i>)
Total	2

7 DISCUSSION

The ditch produced a single small sherd of post-medieval pottery and a little Roman tile. It probably functioned as a drainage ditch or formed part of a field boundary or hedge line, although does not appear on late 19th century historic maps. The wall is documented on early maps and was presumably demolished when the nearby barn fell out of use. The area around the current barn and around the wall foundations has had modern dumping in and around, which could explain the presents of asbestos on site.



Scale 1: 1,250

The excavated features and first edition Ordnance Survey Fig 9

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