



**A programme of archaeological investigation
on land at Chancery Lane, Thrapston
Northamptonshire
June-September 2014**

Report No. 14/191

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Quality control and sign off:

Issue No.	Date approved:	Checked by:	Verified by:	Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	17.10.14	P Chapman	A Maull	A Chapman	Draft for client review

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort1-192876	
Project title	A programme of archaeological investigation on land at Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire, June-September 2014		
Short description	In June to September 2014 an archaeological investigation comprising of strip map and sample and an archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out by MOLA Northampton, for Seagrave Developments. The works identified a Roman ditch and an undated gully.		
Project type	Strip, map, sample and archaeological monitoring		
Previous work	Trial trench evaluation		
Current land use	Former residential care home		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Roman		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Chancery Lane, Thrapston		
Easting Northing	SP 99640 78760		
Area (sq m/ha)	200 sq m		
Height aOD	c 30m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Edmund Taylor		
Project Manager	Anthony Maull (MOLA)		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consultingfor Seagrave Developments		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	23/06/2014		
End date	26/09/2014		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	MOLA Northampton TCL14	Pottery	
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Title	A programme of archaeological investigation on land at Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire, June-September 2014		
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton Report 14/191		
Author(s)	Edmund Taylor and Paul Clements		
Page numbers	8 pages of text and figures		
Date	16 October 2014		

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A programme of archaeological investigation on land at Chancery Lane, Thrapston Northamptonshire June-September 2014

Abstract

In June to September 2014 an archaeological investigation comprising of strip map and sample and an archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out by MOLA Northampton, for Seagrave Developments. The works identified a Roman ditch and an undated gully.

1 INTRODUCTION

A programme of archaeological investigation comprising areas of strip map and sample and archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out by MOLA Northampton on land at Chancery Lane, Thrapston, Northamptonshire during June and September 2014 (NGR SP 99640 78760, Fig 1).

The work was commissioned by Seagrave Developments Ltd and followed an approved Specification prepared by MOLA Northampton (Simmonds 2014). The work was carried out in response to Briefs for archaeological investigation issued by Northamptonshire County Council's Assistant Archaeological Advisor (Mordue 2014). The work was required as a condition on planning consent for residential development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

The archaeological investigation adhered to the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2009) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

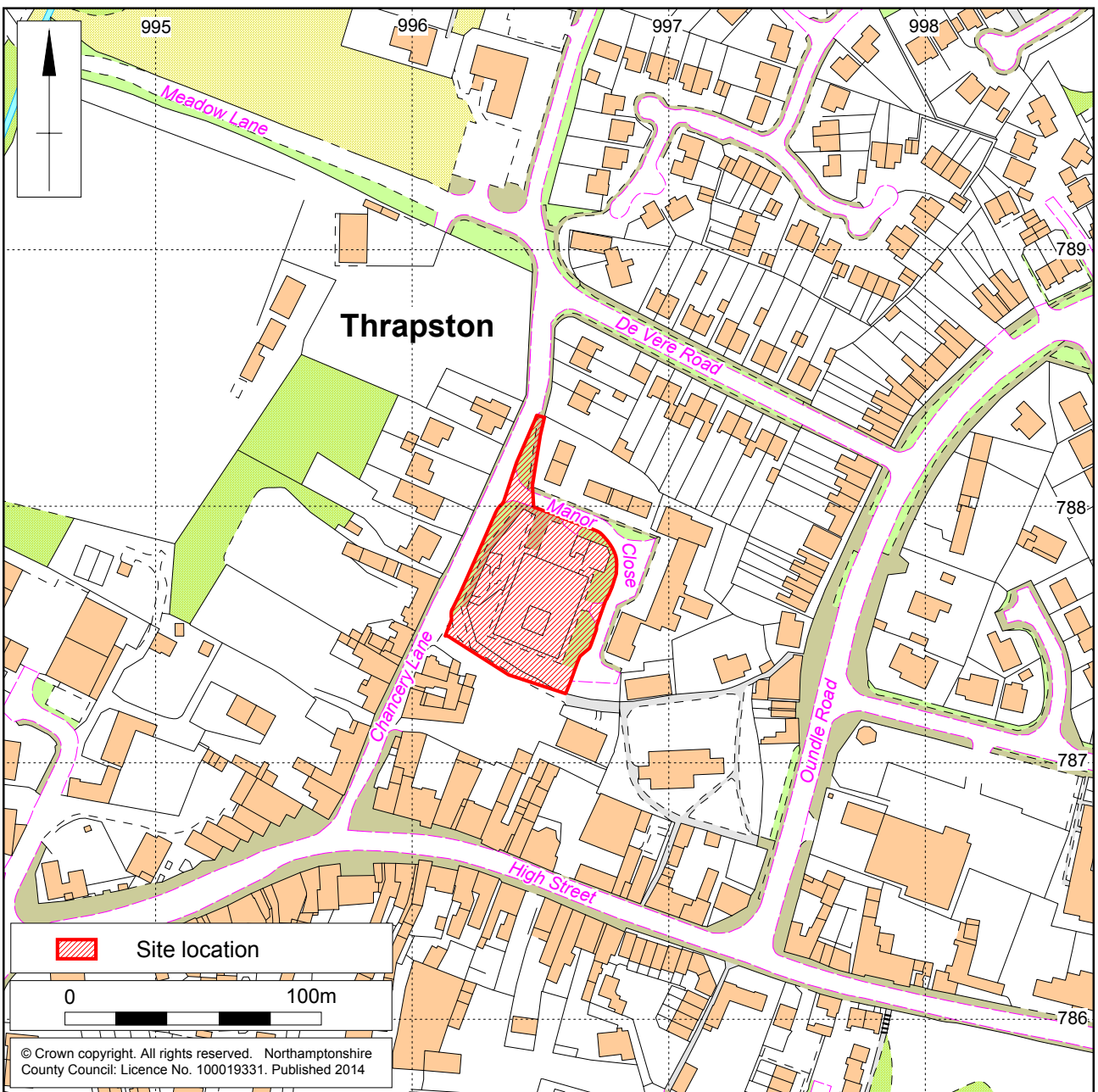
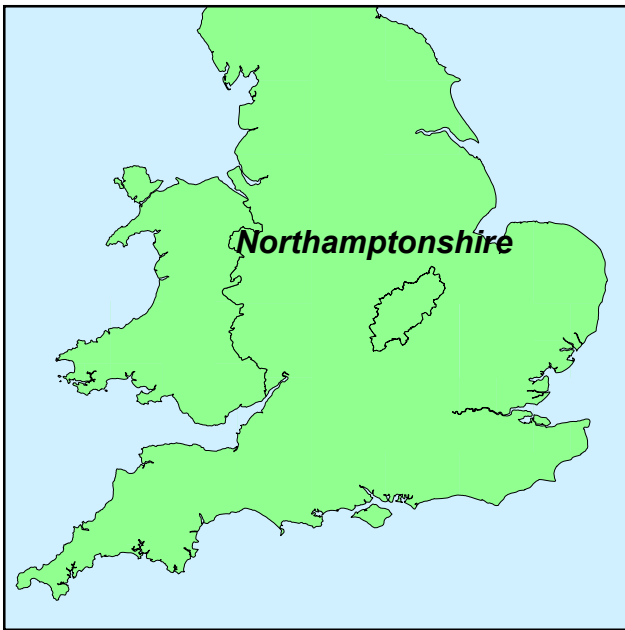
2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

The site lies within the historic core of Thrapston to the east of the River Nene. The study area itself is bounded on all sides by roads and Chancery Lane forms the western boundary. The site lies at a height of 30m aOD. The underlying geology comprises Whitby Mudstones (BGS GeolIndex).

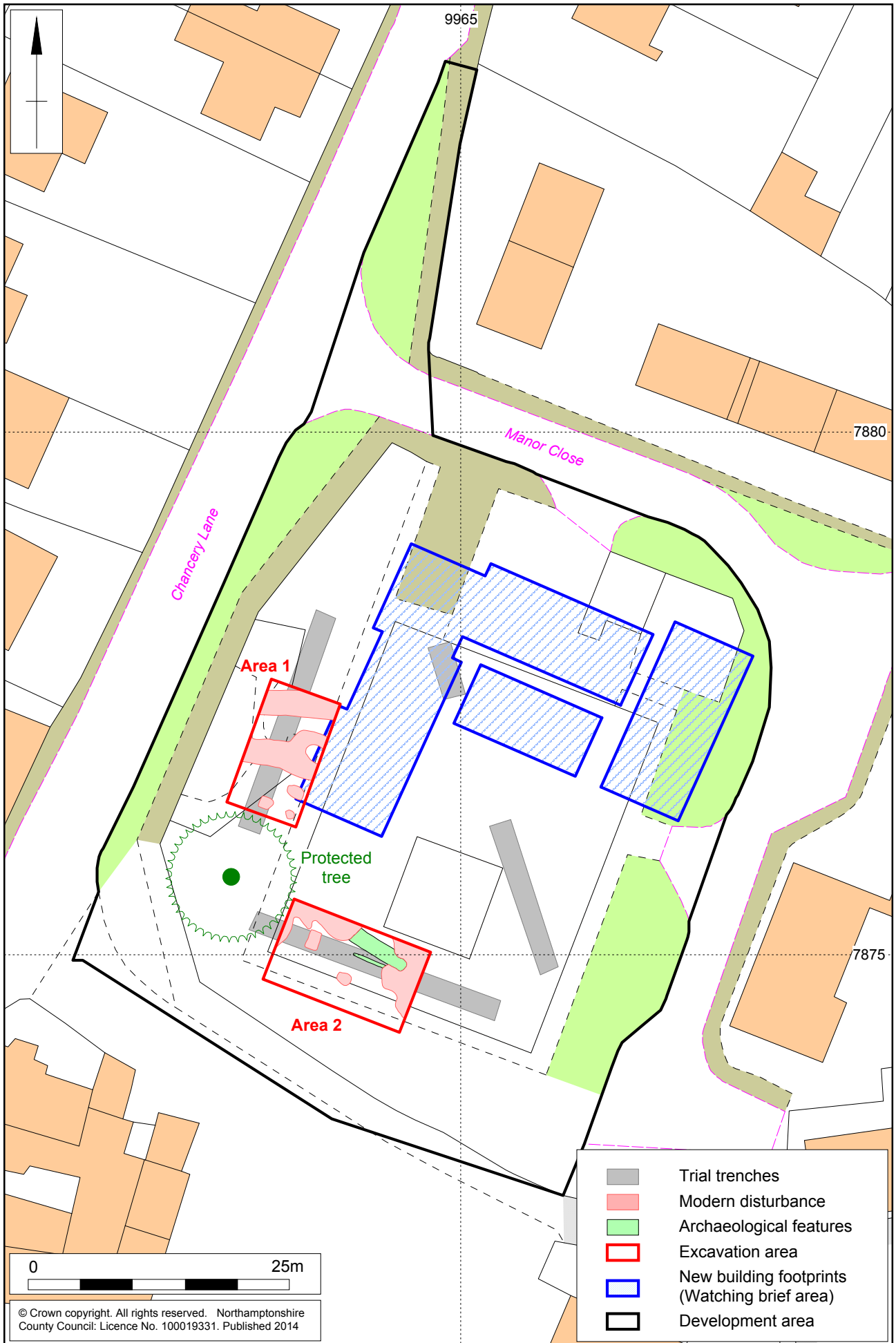
2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The manor of Thrapston is thought to have Saxon origins, although the evidence for this is fragmentary. Sherds of Ipswich ware pottery (Middle Saxon) were recovered from a drain on the site when it was developed in the 1970s (Foard and Ballinger 2000). A number of Roman or Late Saxon inhumations (HER1847/1) were found on the site and in its immediate vicinity, either suggesting the presence of an early church or a large graveyard.



Scale 1:2500

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:500

The excavation area and areas of archaeological observation Fig 2

A motte and bailey castle or ring work (HER1842/4/1) was present on the site and is thought to have been constructed in the late 11th to early 12th centuries (Foard and Ballinger 2000). By the end of the 13th century the castle was no longer in use and the site was converted to a manor house and gardens (HER7204/74). The motte was largely removed during post-medieval and later building and when Chancery Lane was constructed in the 18th century. The manorial site is thought to have been extensive until the 19th century when its buildings were reduced in size.

The site was redeveloped in the 1970s when a residential care home was constructed. A trial trench evaluation of the site was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeology Services (ULAS) and identified limited areas of truncated surviving archaeology comprising a possible pit of probable Roman date and a undated gully and a ditch (Hyam 2012). The features were located in the south-western corner of the site. Much of the site had been heavily disturbed by the now demolished 20th-century care home building and associated services.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aims of the work were:

- to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any archaeological remains on the site in its cultural and environmental setting;
- to determine whether surviving Saxon and medieval remains were present within the site;
- to mitigate the potential impact of development on the archaeological resource through recording, analysis and dissemination.

4 THE STRIP MAP AND SAMPLE AREAS

Two areas were subject to open excavation along the southern and western edges of the development area. Originally a single L-shaped excavation was proposed but this was divided into two due to the presence of a protected tree in the south-west corner of the site. Area 1 was 12m long by 7m wide and Area 2 was 14m long by 8m wide.

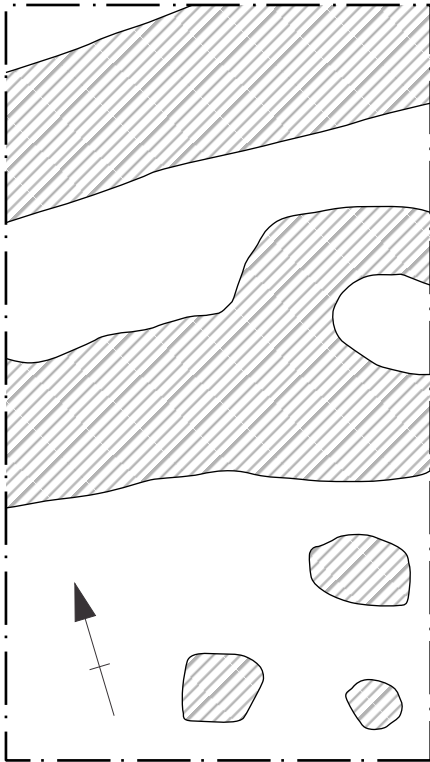
4.1 Area 1

The natural substrate comprised mid orange ironstone brash with patches of pale yellow sand and clay which was encountered at around 1.20m below current ground level.

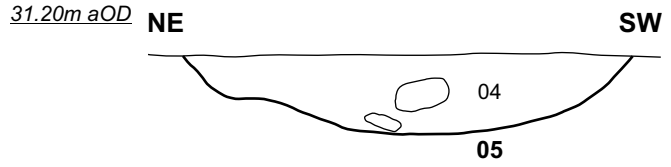
No archaeological remains were encountered and there was extensive recent ground disturbance down to at least 1.20m, comprising a loose dark grey loam with abundant sandstone fragments, brick tile and glass, in places truncating the natural substrate.

Overlying the natural was a layer of made ground 0.80m-1.0m thick which comprised a mid grey sandy loam with frequent inclusions of sandstone, brick and roof slate. This was overlain by a mid brown-orange sandy clay loam subsoil, 0.20m thick which was in turn overlain by dark grey sandy loam topsoil 0.20m-0.30m thick

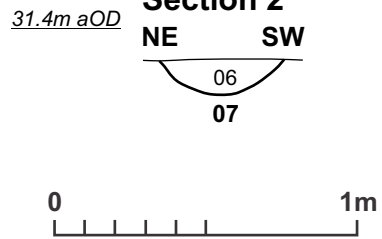
Area 1



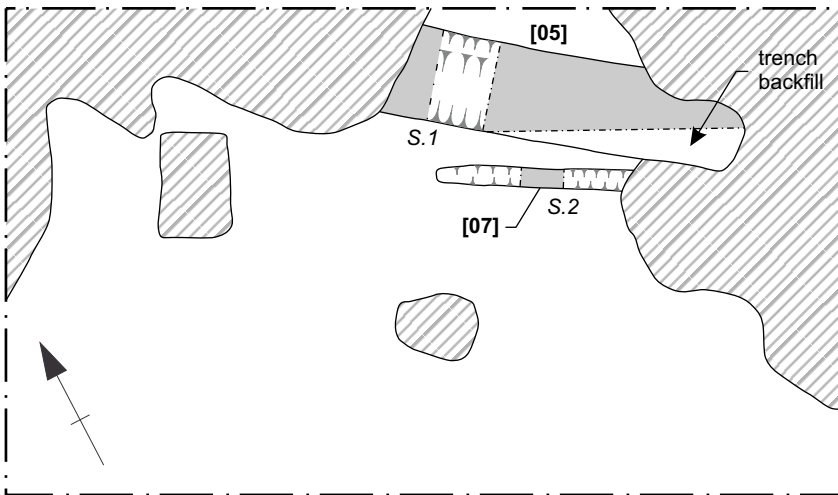
Section 1



Section 2



Area 2



4.2 Area 2

A narrow gully and ditch, excavated in the trial trench evaluation (Hyam 2012) were further investigated in this area. The ditch, [5], aligned north-west to south-east, was 1.50m wide and 0.25m deep, had a stepped north-east edge, a gradually sloping concave south-west edge and a broad, flat base. The fill was dark grey-brown sandy loam which contained sherds of greyware pottery dating from the 2nd century AD. A single rimsherd dating to the late Iron Age was also recovered. The ditch was truncated to the north-west and south-east by post-medieval disturbance, probably relating to the construction of the building which previously occupied the site.

To the south of ditch [5] there was a narrow gully [7] which was at least 3m long, 0.40m wide by 0.10m deep with a bowl-shaped profile. The mid grey-brown sandy clay fill contained no finds.



Ditch [5] and gully [7], looking east Fig 4

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches in the northern part of the site.

The foundation trenches were up to 1.0m deep and showed that there had been extensive ground disturbance throughout the area. The stratigraphic sequence was similar to that seen in the open excavation areas, a truncated natural substrate overlain by up to 0.80m of made ground, comprising grey-brown sandy loam with abundant stone and brick inclusions. This was usually overlain by subsoil but in places it was overlain directly by topsoil.

There were a few isolated pockets of undisturbed ground, mostly near to the northern edge of the site.

No archaeological artefacts or deposits were encountered during the course of the monitoring.

Following discussions with Northamptonshire County Council's Assistant Archaeological Advisor it was decided that, given the extensive disturbance recorded on the Area 2 excavation and in Trench 3 of the evaluation (Hyam 2012), monitoring of groundworks in the southern part of the development area was not necessary.

6 THE FINDS

6.1 The Iron Age pottery by Andy Chapman

From the fill (4) of ditch [5], there was a small group of Roman pottery and a single rim sherd, weighing 33g, which may come from a wheel-turned vessel of the late Iron Age (early-mid 1st century AD).

The sherd, which is well fired and hard, contains frequent large pieces of shell, up to 2.5mm wide, and has a dark brown core, and brown to red-brown surfaces. The ordered shell within the fabric indicates that the body was wheel-turned, but the rim has been crudely shaped by hand. It is unevenly thickened both internally and externally, to form a flat-topped T-shaped rim, which is decorated with bold oval finger-tip impressions, up to 24mm long by 11mm wide. The vessel was probably an open bowl.

6.2 The Roman pottery by Tora Hylton

Ten sherds of pottery with a combined weight of 134g were recovered from the fill (4) of ditch [5]. The overall condition of the pottery is good, the sherds are relatively large and this is reflected in a mean sherd weight of 13.4g. The assemblage comprises locally produced coarsewares in greyware fabrics originating from the Nene Valley. Diagnostic forms represented include necked jars with grooved necks and shoulders dating to the 2nd century AD (cf Howe *et al* 1996, fig 1, 4 and 5).

7 DISCUSSION

The area of strip, map and record identified the ditch and gully found during the previous trial trench evaluation. The ditch has been dated by pottery recovered from the fill to the 2nd century AD. The sherd of late Iron Age pottery is possibly a residual sherd and may well be derived from nearby earlier activity. It is likely that a 2nd century AD date can be extended to the parallel gully to the south of the ditch. No other features were observed within the mitigation area. The works have shown that the majority of the development area has been heavily truncated by groundworks and services for the former residential care home. It is, therefore, likely that any other archaeological features have been removed by these works.

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