



**Archaeological observation, investigation
recording, analysis and publication at Ellands Farm
Hemington, Northamptonshire
April and July 2014**

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Report No. 14/203

Authors: Carol Simmonds and Jason Clarke

Illustrators: Carol Simmonds and Amir Bassir



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molanort1-192950	
Project name	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication at Ellands Farm, Hemington, Northamptonshire, April and July 2014		
Short description	In April and July 2014 MOLA carried out an archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication at Ellands Farm, Hemington, Northamptonshire. Pottery dated to the late 2nd to 3rd centuries AD and 11th to 14th centuries AD was recovered from the topsoil, all was abraded and worn. The observation works identified no archaeological features within the development area.		
Project type	Watching Brief		
Site status	None		
Previous work	None		
Current Land use	Farmland		
Future work	None		
Monument type/ period	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Ellands Farm, Barnwell Road, Hemington		
Study area	3260sqm		
OS Easting & Northing	TL 08155 84640		
Height OD	70aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Carol Simmonds		
Project Manager	Ant Maull		
Sponsor or funding body	Measures Farm/CgMs Consulting		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	April 2014		
End date	July 2014		
ARCHIVES	Location	Content	
Physical		Pottery	
Paper	MOLA Bolton House HFRM14	Record forms, black and white prints and negatives, digital photographs	
Digital		Report text and figures	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication at Ellands Farm, Hemington, Northamptonshire, April and July 2014		
Serial title & volume	14/203		
Author	Carol Simmonds and Jason Clarke		
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Archaeological observation, investigation recording, analysis and publication at Ellands Farm Hemington, Northamptonshire April and July 2014

Abstract

In April and July 2014 MOLA carried out an archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication at Ellands Farm, Hemington, Northamptonshire. Pottery dated to the late 2nd to 3rd centuries AD and 11th to 14th centuries AD was recovered from the topsoil, all was abraded and worn. The observation works identified no archaeological features within the development area.

1 INTRODUCTION

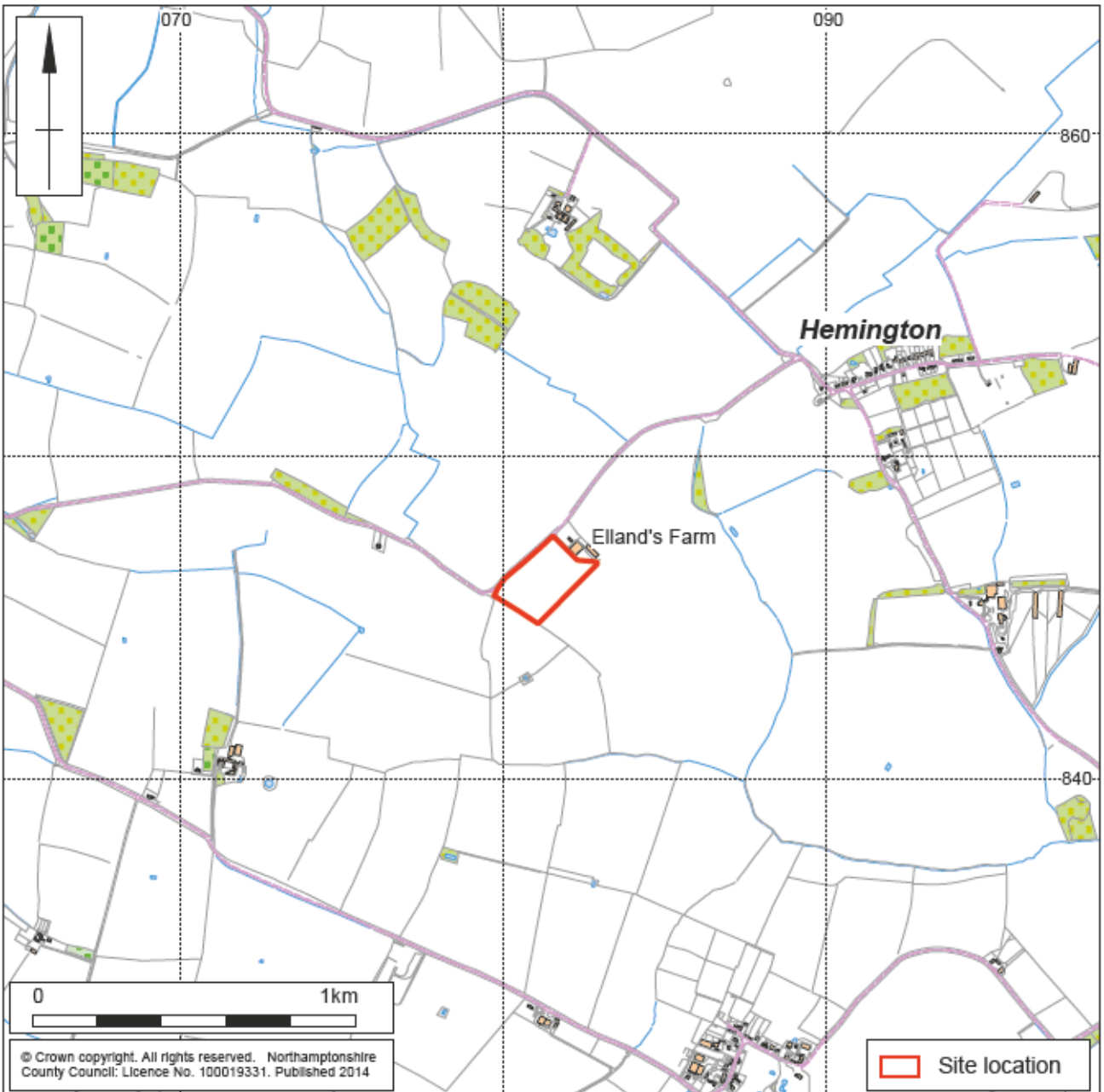
CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of Measures Farm, commissioned MOLA to carry out archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and reporting on land at Ellands Farm, Hemington, Northamptonshire (NGR TL 08155 84640; (Fig 1)). Planning permission has been granted by East Northamptonshire Council for the construction of a free range poultry unit at the farm.

The work follows the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (Muldowney 2014) which was produced in response to a brief from the Assistant Archaeological Advisor at Northamptonshire County Council setting out the requirements for works (Mordue 2014).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The site lies in farmland on a south-east facing slope overlooking the Alconbury Brook which drains into the Great Ouse to the south-east. The site is bounded by a lane to the north-west, the farmyard to the north-east and by agricultural land elsewhere. The land lies at approximately 70m aOD. The bedrock geology is recorded as Kellaways formation and Oxford Clay overlain by Diamicton Till (BGS 2014).

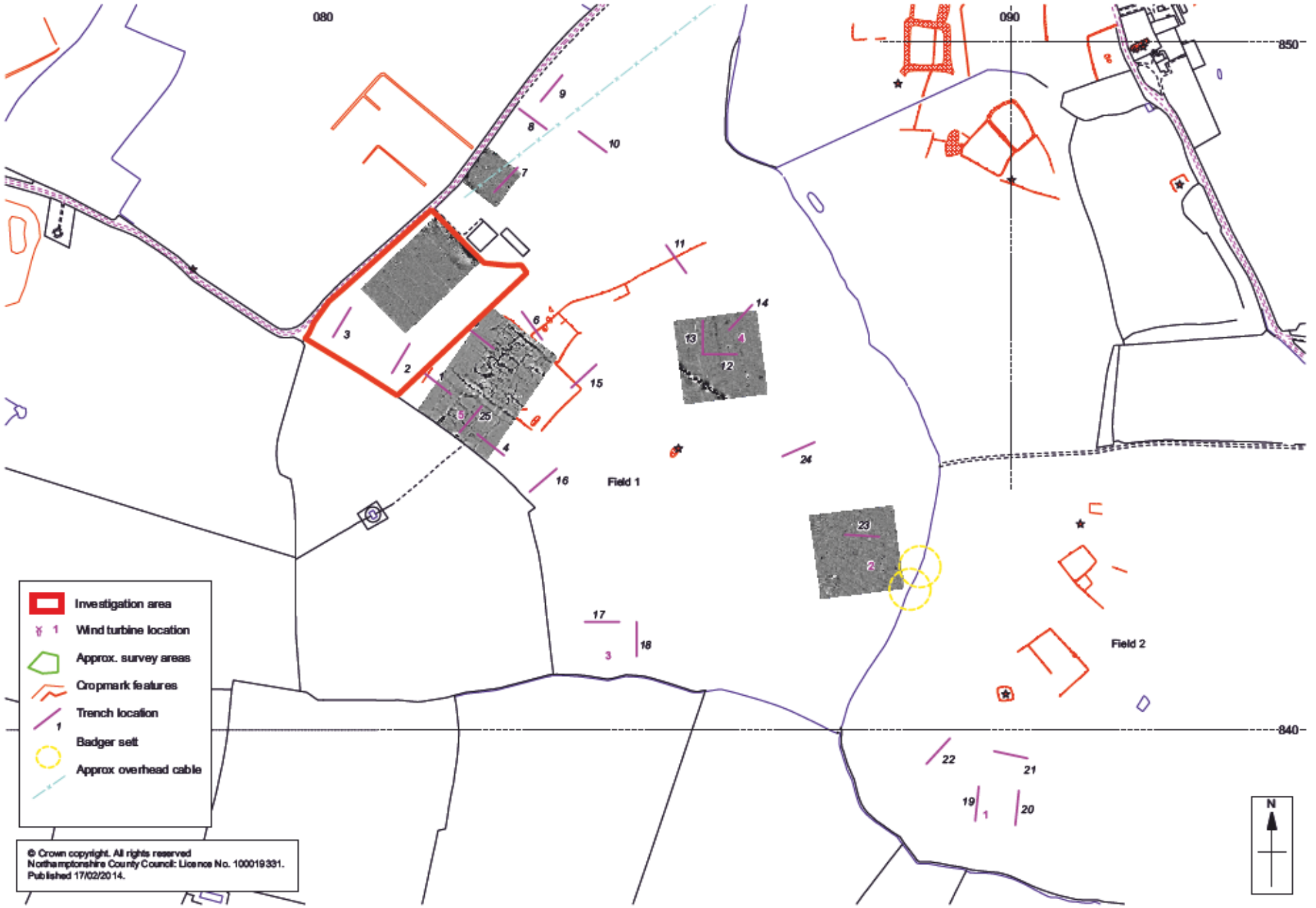


Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1

Scale 1:7,500

Area of investigation and previous works Fig 2



2.2 Historical background

The area around the farm and Hemington, which lies to the north-east, is rich in recorded archaeological features. Much of the information is derived from the cropmarks visible on aerial photographs. The cropmarks generally comprise sub-rectangular enclosures and boundary ditches. The nearest features lie c100m to the east of the site and comprise a palimpsest of sub-rectangular enclosures, aligned north-east to south-west, overlooking Alconbury Brook.

Iron Age and Roman

Geophysical survey and exploratory trial trench evaluation was carried out on land at the farm by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2005 (Morris 2005) as part of a failed planning application to construct wind turbines. The geophysical survey showed a broadly linear complex of enclosures apparently offset to either side of a trackway, 10m wide, aligned north-west to south-east. The evaluation confirmed the presence of the enclosures and associated features and indicated a date range of the 1st to 2nd centuries AD, perhaps continuing into the first part of the 3rd century AD (Fig 2). The evaluation also revealed middle to late Iron Age use of the area to the east of the main Romano-British settlement. These features were generally shallow and were not identified during the geophysical survey.

The current development area was surveyed as part of this phase of work. No archaeological features were identified, however, the results showed that the area was covered in metal debris presumably derived from the adjacent farmyard and this may have masked any archaeological remains in the vicinity. Four undated small ditches were recorded in Trench 3 at the south-west end of the proposed development area (Fig 2).

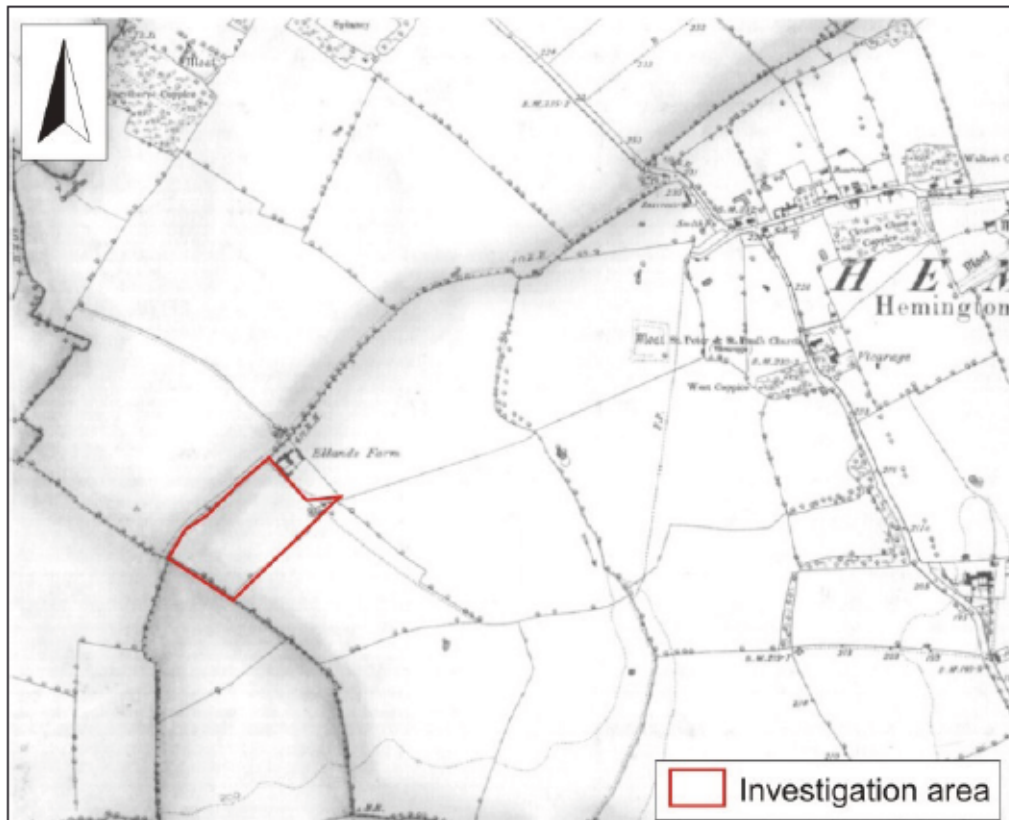
Medieval and post-medieval

The evaluation in 2005 recorded ridge and furrow field cultivation across the areas investigated (Morris 2005). No dating evidence for this cultivation system was recovered but it is likely to be late medieval to post-medieval in origin.

Early edition Ordnance Survey mapping shows the layout of the field parcels much as they are currently, although the farmyard has been subject to significant redevelopment (Figs 3-4).



Excerpt from 1810s Ordnance Survey map Fig 3

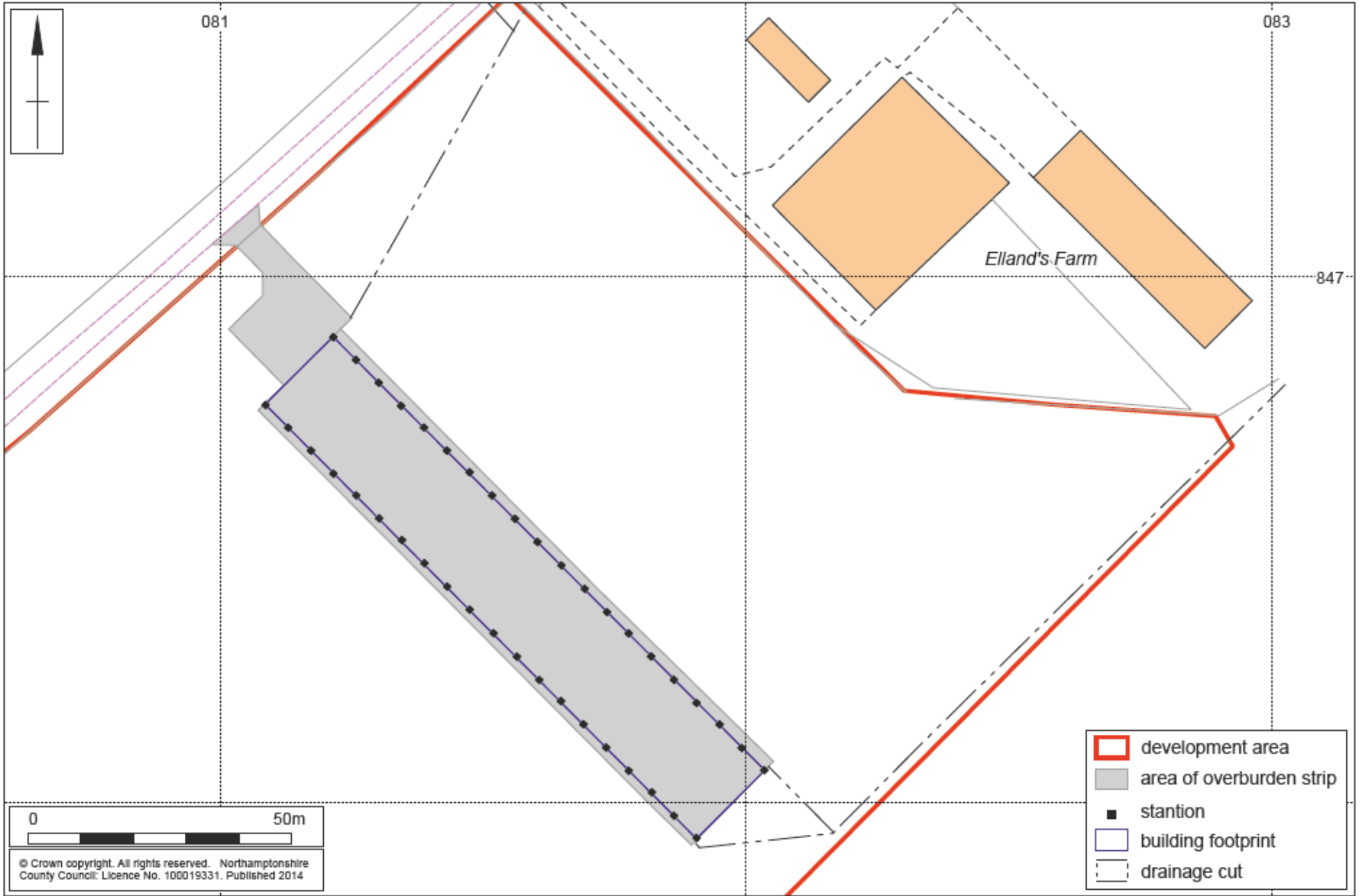


Excerpt from 1880s Ordnance Survey map Fig 4

Scale 1:1,000 (A4)

Areas of archaeological observation

Fig 5



3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area the objectives of the investigation were to:

- Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits exposed during the removal of overburden for the construction of the new poultry barn and any associated below groundworks;
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits;
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

Further objectives included:

- Establishing the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- Recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.

The fieldwork comprised two stages of visits in April 2014. The first visit took place between 1 and 4 April 2014 where observation of the ground reduction works for the access road strip, footprint of the poultry shed, and the excavation of the stanchion pits took place. The access strip comprised excavation of an area measuring 25m north-west to south-east by 20m north-east to south-west down to formation level (c 0.43m below modern ground level). The footprint of the shed was 115m long (north-west to south-east) by 24m wide and up to 0.19m of turf and topsoil was removed before c 0.20m of hardcore was brought in to build up the surface. There were 40 stanchion bases (20 on each of the long sides of the building), measuring 1.0m by 1.0m and between 0.60 and 0.80m deep (Figs 5 and 6).



Excavation in progress of the stanchion bases on the south-western side Fig 6

The second and third periods of site visits took place on the 16, 21 and 22 April and during July 2014, where the observation of the service trenches was undertaken. The service trenches were 0.30m wide and 0.60m deep and were excavated to house drainage pipes (Figs 5 and 7).



Excavation in progress of the service trenches, looking west Fig 7

The groundworks were carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. A photographic record in both black and white negative

format and digital photographs was kept. The written record used MOLA pro-forma sheets.

MOLA is an Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) registered organisation. The works were undertaken in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008) and the procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (EH 2009).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The natural soils comprising a layer of glacial very light yellow clays with chalk flecking (104) was overlain by a thin capping of natural light brown-yellow silty clays (103). This was overlain with a layer of subsoil (102) comprising firm/compact mid brown-yellow clays of variable thickness where it was observed. A layer of topsoil (101) comprising mid yellow-brown slightly silty clay lay across the site. Sherds of heavily abraded pottery ranging from Roman to medieval period were recovered from the topsoil, along with modern land drain fragments and tile (which were not retained).

During the works, after partial removal of the topsoil, the footprint of the poultry shed was covered in a layer of modern hardcore/demolition rubble (105) that was brought in for the purpose of raising the ground level to form a more stable working platform.

Table 1: Context Inventory

NGR 508154 284645		Surface height 70m aOD	Depth of excavations Between 0.19m and 0.80m	
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Turf and topsoil	Compact, mid yellow-brown slightly silty clay with few small flint nodules	0.25m – 0.30m thick	Pottery Brick /tile – not retained
102	Subsoil	Firm- compact mid brown-yellow clays, occasional small – medium flint nodules	0.05m- 0.20m thick	
103	Natural 1	Compact light brown-yellow clays with occasional clusters of flint nodules and rare chalk flecking	0.20m- 0.30m thick	
104	Natural 2	Firm, very light yellow with occasional chalk flecking		
105	Modern hardcore	Hardcore comprising SF2- brick and other demolition debris. Used by contractors to create firm formation layer	0.10m- 0.15m thick	



Stanchion base on the north-eastern side of the poultry shed Fig 8

Remnant furrows from the medieval ridge and furrow cultivation system, aligned north-west to south-east, were present in the southern service trench.

A number of localised services including field drains were seen during the works. In general they comprised ceramic pipes sealed with gravels.

5 ROMAN AND MEDIEVAL POTTERY by Tora Hylton

Five sherds of pottery, with a combined weight of 28g, were recovered from topsoil deposits (101) or were unstratified. The sherds are generally small, undiagnostic and display signs of abrasion and wear.

The earliest datable sherd is a body sherd from a jar in a Nene Valley Colour Coat fabric (LNVCC). A slight curvature on one side suggests that it may have originated from a folded beaker (cf Howe 1996, fig 4, 40-43), suggesting a late 2nd/3rd century date.

The remaining sherds are medieval in date and these comprise undiagnostic body sherds in Shelly Coarseware (CTS 330) and Lyveden/ Stanion 'B' Ware (CTS 320), fabrics which span the 11th to 14th centuries.

Table 2: The pottery

FABRIC TYPE (*)	CONTEXT NUMBER			
	101		U/S	
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)
Roman pottery				
Lower Nene Valley Colour Coat (c post-AD 250) (LNV CC*)	1	6	-	-
Medieval pottery				
Shelly Coarseware (c AD 1100-1400) (CTS 330)**	1	6	2	13
Lyveden/Stanion 'B' Ware c AD 1225-?1400 (CTS 320)**	-	-	1	3
Total	2	12	3	16

* National Roman Fabric Reference Collection

** Northamptonshire Anglo-Saxon and Medieval County Ceramic Type Series

6 ARCHIVE AND PUBLICATION

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

Table 3: Summary of the site archive

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	14
Digital photographs	150
Black and White films	9
Registers	12
Context Sheets	5
Permatrace plans	1
Finds boxes	1

The site records will be stored on the premises of MOLA until a suitable archive becomes available.

A note will be added to the annual summaries in South Midlands Archaeology (Council British Archaeology, South Midlands Group). Bound and digital copies of the report will be submitted to the client and to Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record. The project has been entered onto the On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS), and a digital copy of the report will be available through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

7 CONCLUSIONS

The observation works identified no archaeological features within the development area. Pottery recovered from the topsoil was abraded and worn suggesting it had been within the topsoil for some time. The Roman sherd probably originated from the nearby settlement, dated to the 1st to 2nd centuries AD identified in geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation.

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October 2014



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