Archaeological observation, investigation recording and analysis of land at Oundle Lodge Farm, Stoke Doyle, Northamptonshire July-August 2014

Report No 14/196

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	**OASIS No: molanort1-193639**	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation, analysis and recording of land at Oundle Lodge Farm, Stoke Doyle July-August 2014	
Short description	An archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was carried out by MOLA, during construction work at Oundle Lodge Farm, Stoke Doyle. Four undated archaeological features were present comprising three ditches likely to be associated with the late Iron Age settlement identified in the earlier evaluation and a stone- lined drain of likely medieval origin.	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Farmland	
Future work	None	
Monument type and period	Iron Age and Medieval	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Oundle Lodge Farm, Stoke Doyle, Northamptonshire.	
Easting Northing	TL 0240 8732	
Area (sq m/ha)	1.4ha	
Height aOD	48m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	MOLA	
Director/Supervisor	Tim Sharman (MOLA Northampton)	
Project Manager	Liz Muldowney (MOLA Northampton)	
Sponsor or funding body	Bletsoes Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	29/07/2014	
End date	27/08/2014	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Contents**
Physical		Watching brief forms, permatrace plans
Paper		
Digital		Client report PDF
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Unpublished client report	
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Archaeological observation, investigation recording and analysis of land at Oundle Lodge Farm, Stoke Doyle, Northamptonshire July-August 2014

Abstract

An archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was carried out by MOLA, during construction works at Oundle Lodge Farm, Stoke Doyle, Northamptonshire. Four undated archaeological features were present comprising three ditches likely to be associated with the late Iron Age settlement identified in the earlier evaluation and a stone lined date of likely medieval origin.

1 INTRODUCTION

Bletsoes, on behalf of their client Mr J Gent, commissioned MOLA to carry out archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and reporting on land at Oundle Lodge Farm, Stoke Doyle, Northamptonshire (NGR TL 0240 8732; (Fig 1). Planning permission had been granted for the construction of new agricultural buildings and associated works.

A condition on the planning consent stated there was a requirement for archaeological investigation in accordance with Section 12, paragraph 128 and Appendix 2 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012). This document had been prepared by MOLA in response to a brief from the Assistant Archaeological Advisor at Northamptonshire County Council setting out the requirements for works.

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

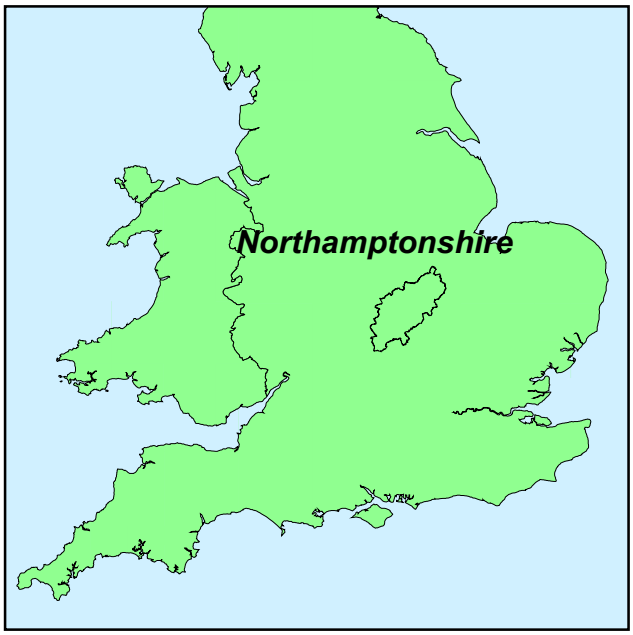
2 BACKGROUND

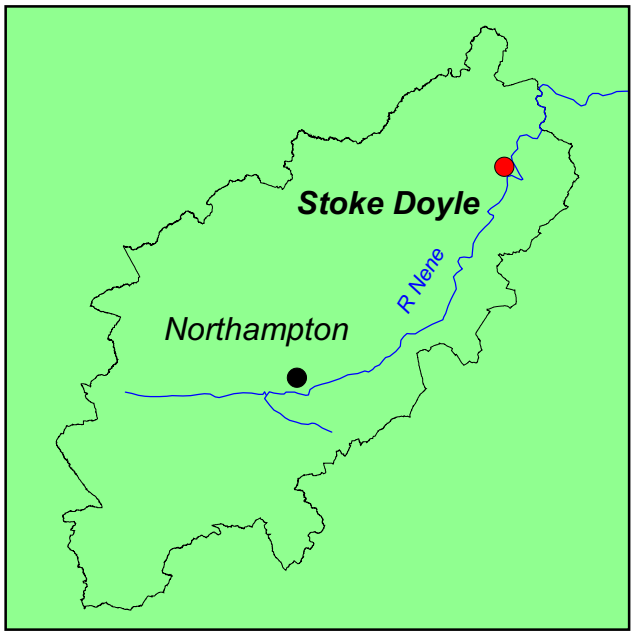
2.1 Location and geology

Oundle Lodge lies 1km to the south-west of Oundle and 400m to the west of Stoke Doyle Road (Fig 1). The current farm buildings of Oundle Lodge are surrounded by arable fields.

The development area, subject to archaeological mitigation, comprises a rectangular area of farm land that will now house agricultural buildings and farmyard structures. Overhead power lines are aligned along the eastern boundary of the field.

The site lies between 47-48m aOD. The bedrock geology comprises Kellaways Formation and Oxford Clay Formation (undifferentiated). No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2014).





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Site location Fig 1

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

Historic Environment Record data

The survey site lies within an area of known archaeological interest. There are a number of reported finds and recorded monuments within a 1km range, especially along the River Nene located to the east (Fig 2). These records, derived from the Historic Environment Record (HER), include Neolithic, Bronze Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon period finds and sites, details of the sites are shown in Table 1.

A complex of cropmarks lies within the application area (Fig 1). These were interpreted as enclosure ditches and pits of probable prehistoric date in the HER.

Previous Archaeological Investigation

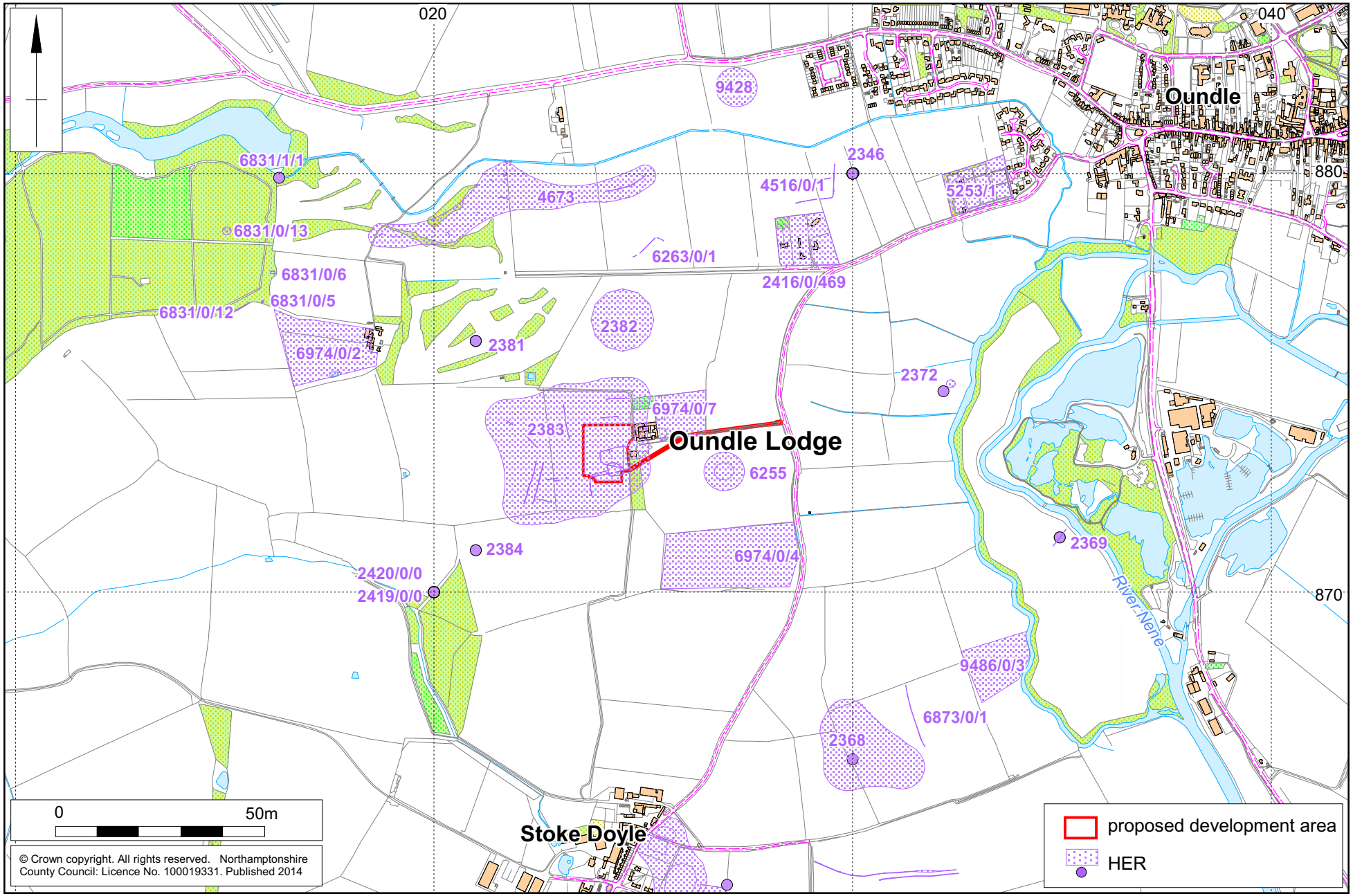
Archaeological geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation of the development area were carried out by MOLA during March and April 2014 (Simmonds *et al* 2014). The detailed magnetometer survey identified at least two rectilinear enclosures, a D-shaped enclosure and a possible droveway. Trial trenching confirmed that these anomalies/cropmarks were late Iron Age (1st century BC to 1st century AD) enclosures and a probable droveway. Further archaeological remains comprising a pit and a possible ring gully were also identified (Fig 3).

Evidence for medieval agricultural activity in the form of ridge and furrow cultivation was recorded across the site both in the geophysical survey and the trenching.

Table 1: Historic Environment Record data

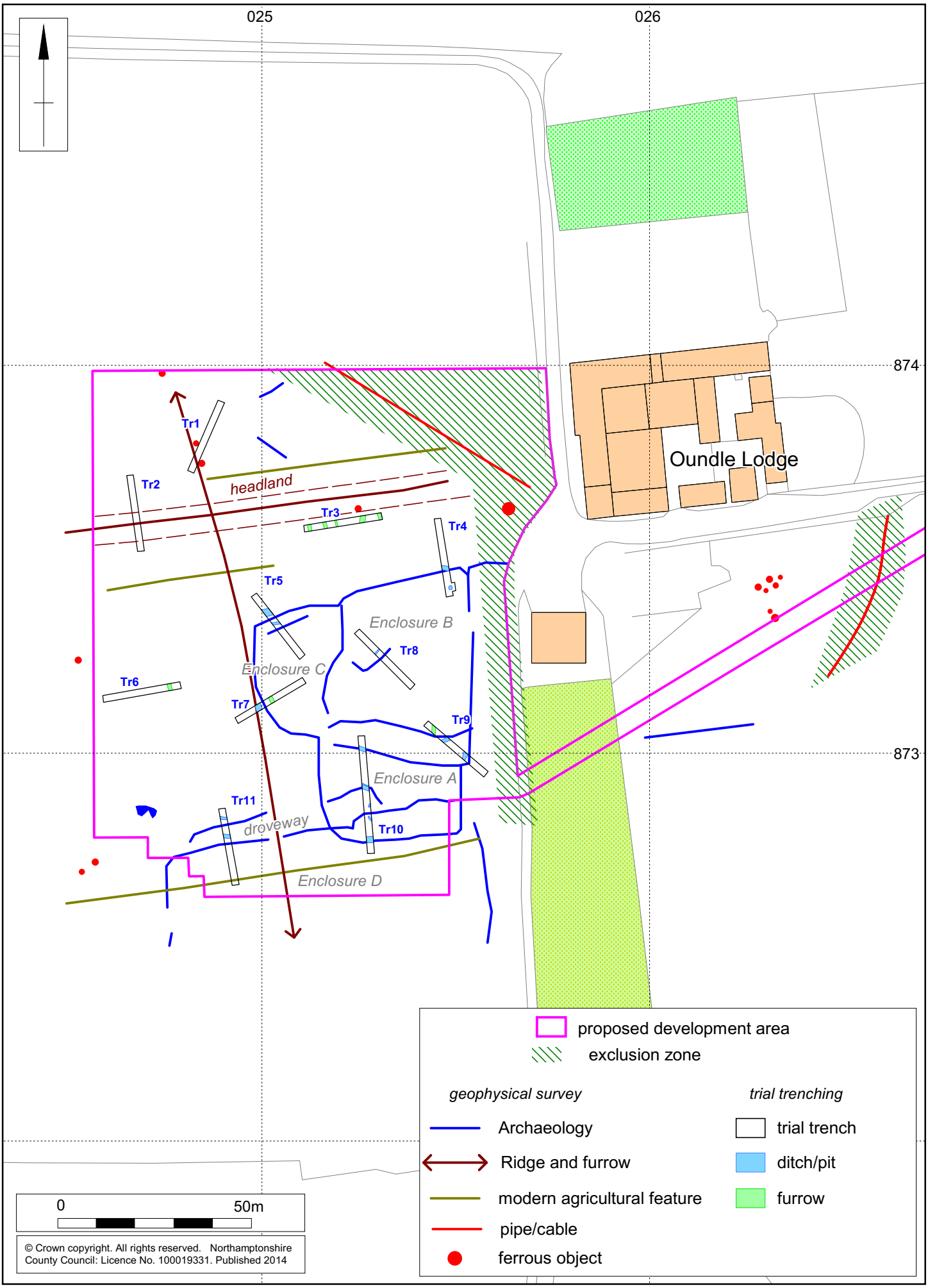
HER number	Description
2346	Palaeolithic activity
2368	Palaeolithic activity
2369	Undated ditch
2372	Bronze Age burials
2381	Undated activity
2382	Modern activity
2383	Prehistoric enclosures
2384	Bronze Age
2416/0/469	Modern, infectious diseases hospital
2419/0/0	Unstratified Roman finds
2420/0/0	Unstratified medieval find
4516/0/1	Undated field boundaries
4673	Post medieval ditches
5253/1	Oundle Cemetery
6255	Undated quarrying
6263/0/1	Undated ditch
6831/0/5	Undated pond
6831/0/6	Undated pond
6831/0/12	Undated bank and ditch
6831/0/13	Undated pond
6831/1/1	Undated limestone quarrying
6873/0/1	Undated ditch
6974/0/2	Medieval open field system
6974/0/4	Medieval open field system
6974/0/7	Medieval open field system
9428	Bronze Age settlement
9486/0/3	Medieval open field system

Scale 1:12,500 (A4)



Historic Environment Record data

Fig 2



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Trench locations with archaeological features and magnetometer survey interpretation

Fig 3

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The objectives of the investigation were to:

- Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits exposed during the excavation for five new farm buildings and 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 landscape;
- 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.

3.2 Methodology

Recording followed standard MOLA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (2014). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. Photography was with 35mm black and white film and digital images.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2014) and *Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008).

Throughout the development area, turf and some topsoil had already been removed and in the southernmost part, a large area of crushed rubble hard core had been deposited and levelled to form areas of future hard standing, prior to the observations taking place.

Within the observation area, five separate areas of groundworks for the construction of five new buildings and the installation of 16 service trenches were observed in generally good weather conditions on eight separate occasions during July and August (Fig 4). The groundworks for the buildings were undertaken using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m flat ditching bucket or a mini-mechanical 360° excavator fitted with a narrow toothed bucket to remove topsoil, subsoil and underlying natural substratum within the development area. The excavation of the service trenches was carried out using a laser-guided, tracked, land-drainage machine. The groundwork areas were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features, if present.

The areas of groundworks associated with the new development are described below(Fig 4).

Building 1:
In the centre of the development area, 17 small, rectangular trenches (SP1-SP17) were dug to provide stanchion support bases for a circular cattle shed with a diameter of 30m. Around the circumference, 16 trenches were excavated with a 0.3m wide toothed, bucket. Each stanchion trench measured 1.0m long by 0.6m wide x and 0.9m deep. A the centre of the new circular cattle shed a single stanchion trench measuring 2.0m long x 2.0m wide x 0.9m deep was also dug. Prior to the excavation of the stanchion trenches, observation took place within the northernmost portion of the new building where the ground surface was further lowered by a depth of approximately 0.3m using a large mechanical 360° excavator fitted with a 1.8m ditching bucket.

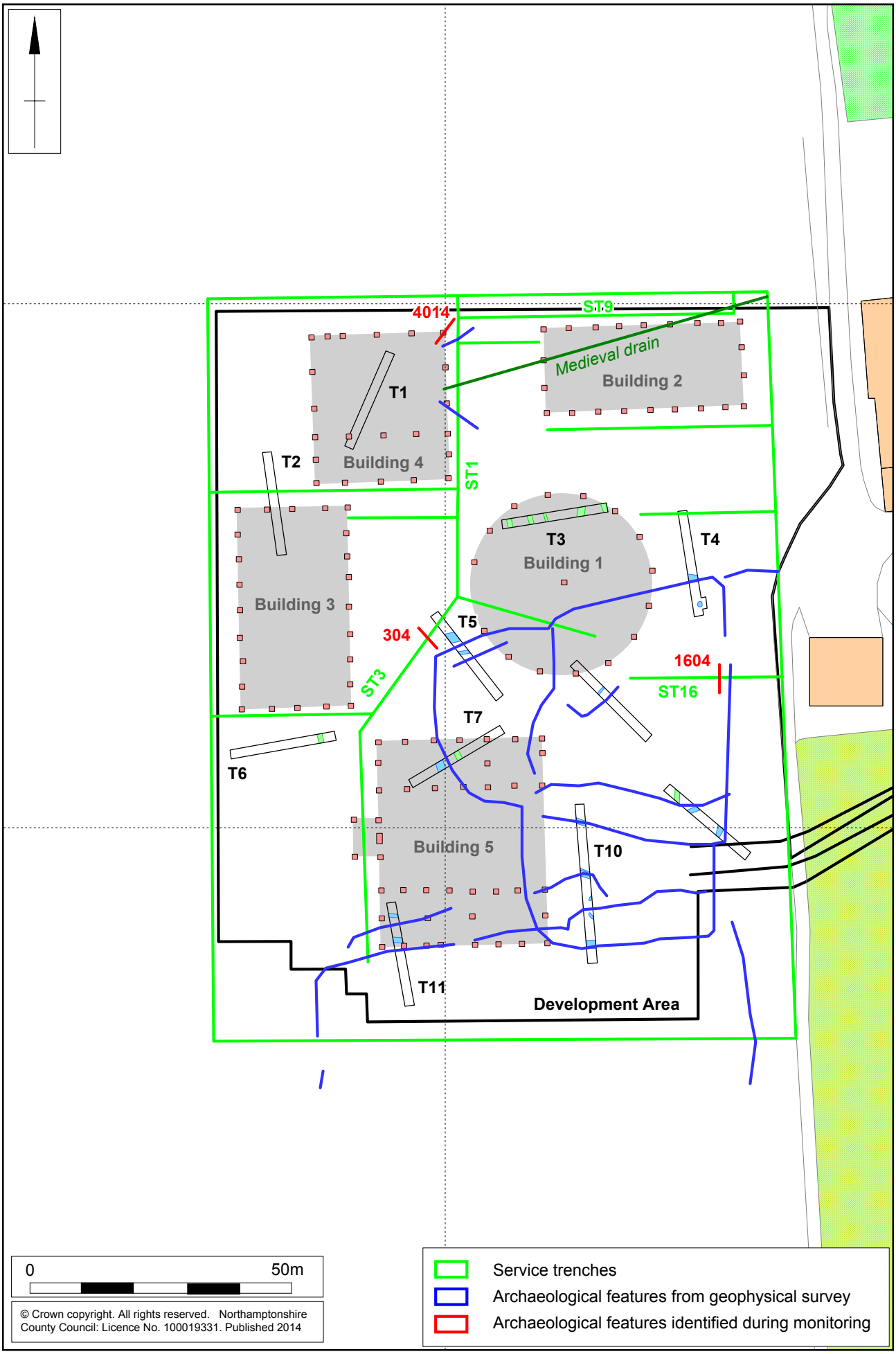
Building 2
On the north-eastern side of the development area, a total of 22 small trenches (T201-222) were dug to provide stanchion support bases for a new rectangular building 35m long x 15m wide. Each stanchion trench measured 1m x 1m X 0.75m. Prior to the excavation of the stanchion trenches, the ground surface within the westernmost half of the new building footprint was lowered slightly by a depth of approximately 0.3m using a large mechanical 360° excavator fitted with a 1.8m ditching bucket. This area was also observed.

Building 3
On the western side of the development area, 24 small trenches (T301-324), each 1.0m x 1.0m x 0.75m were dug to provide stanchion support bases for a rectangular building 35m long x 20m wide. Prior to the excavation of the stanchion trenches, observation took place within the northernmost portion of the new building where the ground surface was further lowered by a depth of approximately 0.3m using a large mechanical 360° excavator fitted with a 1.8m ditching bucket.

Building 4
On the north-western side of the development area, 22 small trenches (T401-422), each 1.0m x 1.0m x 0.75m were dug to provide stanchion support bases for a square shaped building approximately 24m long x 24m wide. Prior to the excavation of the stanchion trenches, the ground surface within the southern half of the new building footprint was lowered slightly by a depth of approximately 0.3m using a large mechanical 360° excavator fitted with a 1.8m ditching bucket. This area was also observed.

Building 5
On the south eastern side of the development, 41 small trenches (T501-541), each 1.0m x 1.0m x 0.75m were dug to provide stanchion support bases for a square shaped building 25m long x 35m wide.

A total of 16 service trenches (ST 1-16) of varying lengths and orientation were dug throughout the development area. The shortest trench (ST2) was 15m long running in an east to west direction to the east of building 3 and the longest were ST9 and ST11 both 140m long aligned north to south along the west and east perimeters respectively of the development area. All the service trenches were 0.2m wide x 1.0m deep and were excavated using a laser-guided, tracked land drainage machine.



Scale 1:1000 (A4)

Location of features identified during monitoring Fig 4

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

Three ditches of potentially Iron Age date and one stone-lined drain possibly of medieval origin, were observed within the development area.

In service trench ST3 a shallow, linear ditch or gully (304) 0.5m wide by 0.45m deep, aligned north-west to south-east was observed. The ditch appeared to have a V-shaped profile. Both fills (305) and (306) were similar in appearance, with numerous fragments of re-deposited fissile limestone. However, the uppermost fill (306) appeared to contain some fragments of burnt limestone (Figs 4 and 5).

In service trench ST16 a shallow, linear, V-shaped ditch (1604) 0.8m wide x 0.45 deep, aligned broadly north to south was observed (Figs 4 and 6). The lower fill consisted mostly of re-deposited limestone (1605) and an upper fill (1606) largely consisting of mid brown silty clay. Ditch (1604) appears to correspond to a ditch revealed in the geophysical survey, forming part of the previous archaeological investigation which included trial trenching, carried out during March and April 2014 by MOLA.

In stanchion trench 401, the edge of a possible ditch (4014) was observed aligned roughly north-east to south-west. The ditch (Figs 4 and 7) appeared to have a U-shaped profile filled with dark yellowish brown sandy clay loam (4014) with numerous fragments of re-deposited limestone. Ditch (4014) appears to be in the same location as an isolated stretch of ditch revealed during the geophysical evaluation (Fig 4)

A stone-lined drain, possibly of medieval origin, aligned roughly north-east to south-west was observed within Service Trench 1, Service Trench 5 and stanchion trench 209 (Fig 4).

Service trench ST3, ditch 304 looking south-east Fig 5

Service trench ST16, ditch 1604 looking north Fig 6

Stanchion trench T401, possible ditch 4014, looking south. Fig 7

5 DISCUSSION

A small number of undated features were identified. Two of the ditches appear to correspond to linear features revealed in the geophysical survey and dated to the Iron Age during the evaluation. Another ditch was not identified in the earlier evaluation but its location suggests that it may have been associated with Iron Age enclosures.

The positioning of the farmyard structures to mitigate for the presence of the known archaeological resource was, for the most part, effective at reducing the potential impact of the development on the underlying Iron Age settlement.

The stone-lined field drain in the northern part of the development zone is of uncertain date. As it appears to be running parallel with, and slightly to the north of, a medieval ridge and furrow headland and a series of linear agricultural features which were identified during the geophysical survey (Fig 3), it may well be part of the medieval agricultural landscape.

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