



**Archaeological observation, investigation, recording
and analysis at Spring Lane Primary School
Spring Lane, Northampton
May 2014-May 2015**

Report No. 15/112

Author: Adam Reid

Illustrator: Amir Bassir



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and analysis at Spring Lane Primary School, Spring
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Other finds: Tora Hylton

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molanort1- 214179	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis at Spring Lane Primary School, Spring Lane, Northampton.		
Short description	An archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was carried out by MOLA Northampton during construction works at Spring Lane Primary School, Spring Lane, Northampton. Much of the site was disturbed by modern building activity but small areas of medieval stratigraphy survived. Two pits have produced small pottery assemblages dating to the 12th century. An ironstone wall and a stone lined well date to the 12th century or later, with the well backfilled in the 19th century.		
Project type	Watching Brief		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	School Site		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Medieval well and pits.		
Significant finds	Medieval pottery.		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Spring Lane Primary School, Spring Lane, Northampton.		
Easting Northing	SP 74920 60795		
Area (sq m/ha)	c. 2.10ha		
Height aOD	70-65m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA		
Director/Supervisor	Adam Reid and Tim Sharman (MOLA Northampton)		
Project Manager	Liz Muldowney (MOLA Northampton)		
Sponsor or funding body	Interserve Construction		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	12/05/2014		
End date	20/05/2015		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	MOLA Northampton.	Pottery, animal bone and other finds.	
Paper		Site file.	
Digital	NOR SLP 13	Client report PDF.	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Unpublished client report			
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Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis at Spring Lane Primary School, Spring Lane, Northampton, May 2014 – May 2015

Abstract

An archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was carried out by MOLA Northampton during construction works at Spring Lane Primary School, Spring Lane, Northampton. Much of the site was disturbed by modern building activity but small areas of medieval stratigraphy survived. Two pits have produced small pottery assemblages dating to the 12th century. An ironstone wall and a stone lined well date to the 12th century or later, with the well backfilled in the 19th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

Interserve Construction commissioned MOLA Northampton to carry out archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and reporting on groundworks in advance of proposed development on land at Spring Lane Primary School, Spring Lane, Northampton (NGR SP 74920 60795; (Fig 1). Planning permission was granted by Northamptonshire County Council for the construction of a new two storey building and a new hard surfaced, all-weather sports court at Spring Lane Primary School.

The requirements for the project were set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (NA 2013), which was produced in response to a brief from the Archaeological Advisor at Northamptonshire County Council.

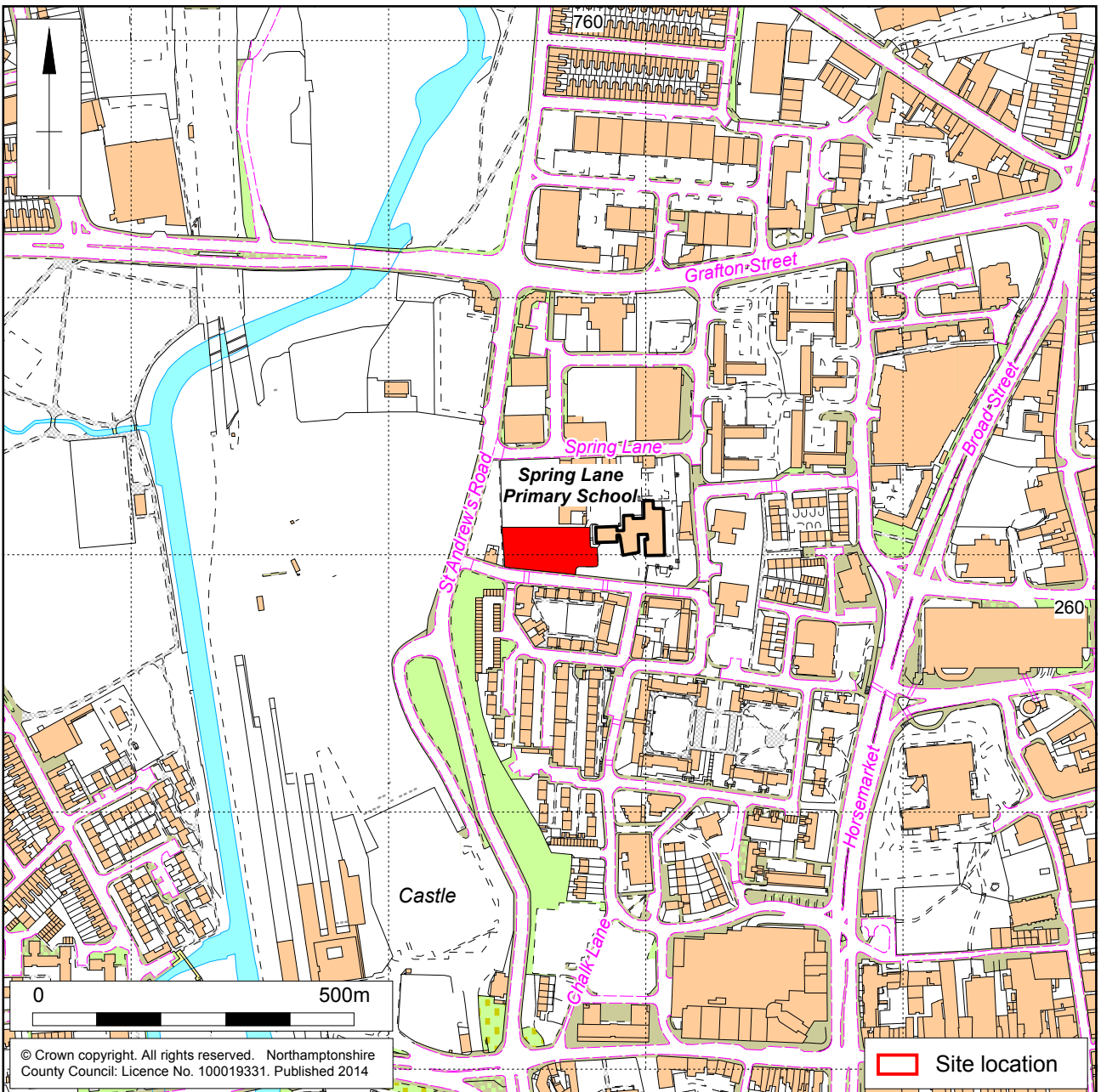
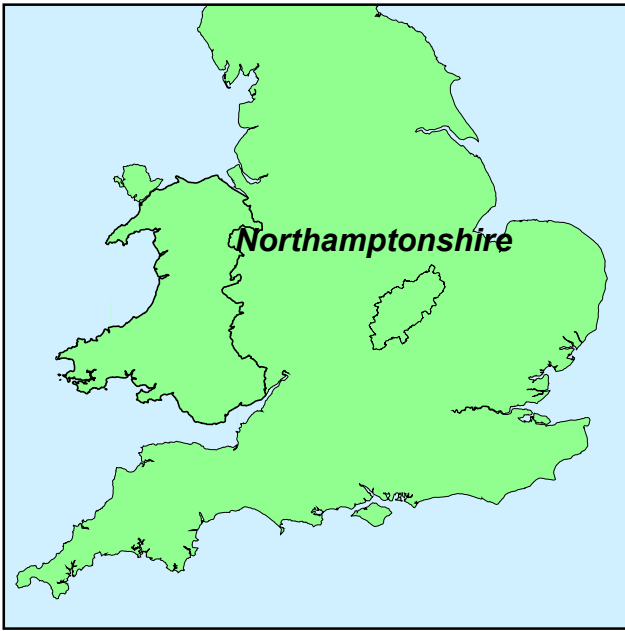
MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) registered organisation. This document has been prepared in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a) and the procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (EH 2009).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

The site is located within the core of the town of Northampton. The school site is bounded to the north by the Spring Lane, to the east by Crispin Street, to the south by Scarletwell Street and to the west by St Andrew's Road. The area to be developed for the new building is generally level, although the whole school plot slopes down to St Andrew's Street to the west from approximately 70m aOD to approximately 65m aOD.

The bedrock geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey as comprising Northampton Sand formation – Ooidal Ironstone and Whitby Mudstone Formation (BGS 2013).



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

2.2. Historical and Archaeological Background

Prehistoric

There is sparse evidence for prehistoric occupation within 500m of the development area.

Iron Age/Romano-British

No Romano-British settlement evidence has been recorded within the vicinity of the site, although Roman coins and pottery were recovered from the site of the castle, to the south-west in the 19th century.

Saxon and medieval

The development area is immediately to the north of the presumed line of the Anglo-Saxon town defences. To the south of the defensive line extensive late Saxon occupation has been recorded at Chalk Lane (Williams and Shaw 1981) and Black Lion Hill (Shaw 1985). The development area is within the boundaries of the expanded medieval town of Northampton. Northampton Castle (MNN3946), lying 350m to the south-west of the development area, was probably constructed in the early 12th century AD and was at its height in the late 12th century AD (Walker 2011).

Post-medieval

In the early 18th century the development area was part of fields by the river. By the middle of the 19th century tenements had extended from the east towards the river and covered part of the current school site, the remainder is shown as fields and an orchard on Wood and Law's map dated 1847. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, dated 1887, shows that the whole parcel of land leading down to the river had been developed with properties fronting on to Scarletwell Street and Spring Lane, the school itself was opened in 1874 and was set back from the frontage on Scarletwell Street. Further infilling occurred into the early 20th-century, before properties were removed in the pre-2nd World War period in the western half of the land parcel. The school expanded to the west following the 2nd World War.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The main objectives of the works 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;
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.

3.2 Methodology

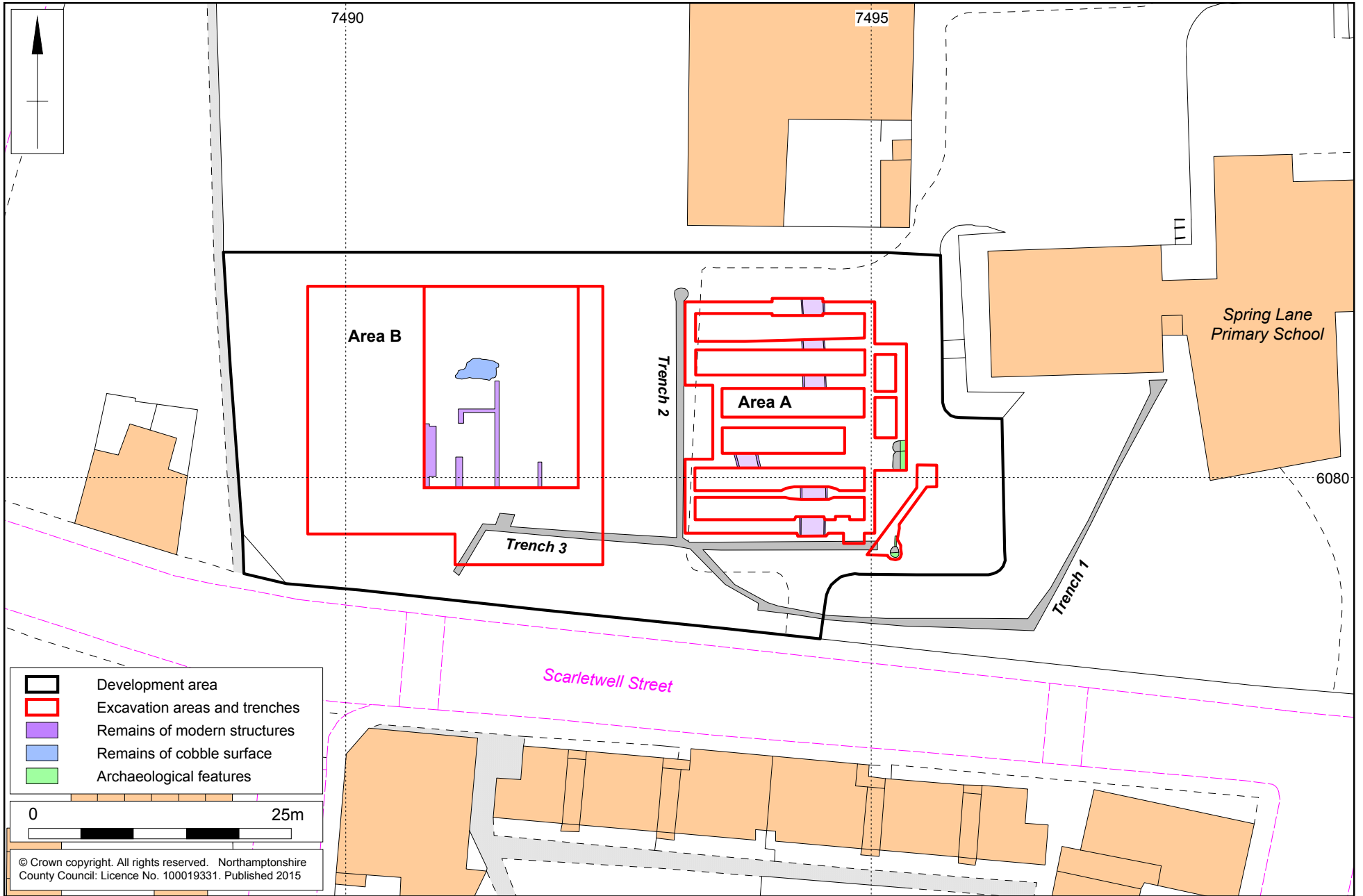
Recording followed standard MOLA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (2014). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. Photography was with 35mm black and white film and digital images. All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014b) and *Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a).

Several phases of machine excavation were observed by a qualified archaeologist during the period starting May 12 2014 and finishing May 20 2015 (Fig 2). In all cases a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket was used to remove any overburden to either the archaeological horizon or to a level required by the ground works contractor. Construction of the new two-storey building required the excavation of footing trenches to a maximum depth of 2m (Area A) and additional trenches were excavated around the building to a maximum depth of 2m in order to install drainage and service ducts (Trenches 1, 2 and 3). Construction of the all-weather court required the stripping of a 25m by 25m area down to a depth of 0.65m (Area B).

Scale 1:500 (A4)

The mitigation areas, showing archaeological features

Fig 2



4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 Area A

Excavation in Area A comprised several trenches, 0.60m wide, which made up the footprint for the new building (Fig 3). Several archaeological features were noted in this part of the site, dating from the medieval to modern periods. The earliest features, dating from the medieval period and retaining a degree of stratification, were located to the east and had partially survived later reuse of the site.

Layer, well and wall

A layer (18), comprising compact yellow-brown sandy clayey silt, containing two sherds of 12th century pottery was identified in part of the easternmost footing trench. It had been heavily truncated, but was apparently cut by the well construction pit [20].

Sub-circular well pit [20] (Figs 3, 5 and Fig 6, Section 4) was identified in the south-eastern corner of Area A. The well construction cut measured 1.25m east to west and 1.40m north to south and was excavated to a depth of 1m. The well packing material (21) was visible on the north-western edge of the feature and comprised compact yellow-brown sandy clayey silt with numerous small fragments of ironstone. It contained a single sherd of 12th century pottery. The well was lined with large squared-off blocks of worked and unworked ironstone (14), which appear not to have been mortared.

The well contained a backfill deposit (15), which was a minimum of 0.25m deep, comprised loose dark yellow brown sandy clayey silt and contained post-medieval pottery.

A 1m long stretch of ironstone wall footing [19] (Figs 3 and 4), aligned north to south, measuring 0.25m wide and 0.40m high, was recorded cutting into the backfill of the well construction pit and butting up against the well lining. The wall was composed of rough ironstone blocks ranging in size from 0.25 x 0.25 x 0.20m to 0.20 x 0.20 x 0.05m. The blocks were bonded with compact dark brown silty clay. It was truncated to the north by modern disturbance, no further trace was identified.

Pit group

Pits [3] and [5] were identified slightly to the north of the well, during the excavation of the lift shaft pit for the new building. Pit [3] (Fig 7 and Fig 6, Section 1) was cut into the ironstone and was sub-circular, measuring 0.9m across, 0.2m deep and contained 12th century pottery. The possibility of it being the terminal of a feature aligned east-west, and lying beyond the eastern baulk cannot be discounted.

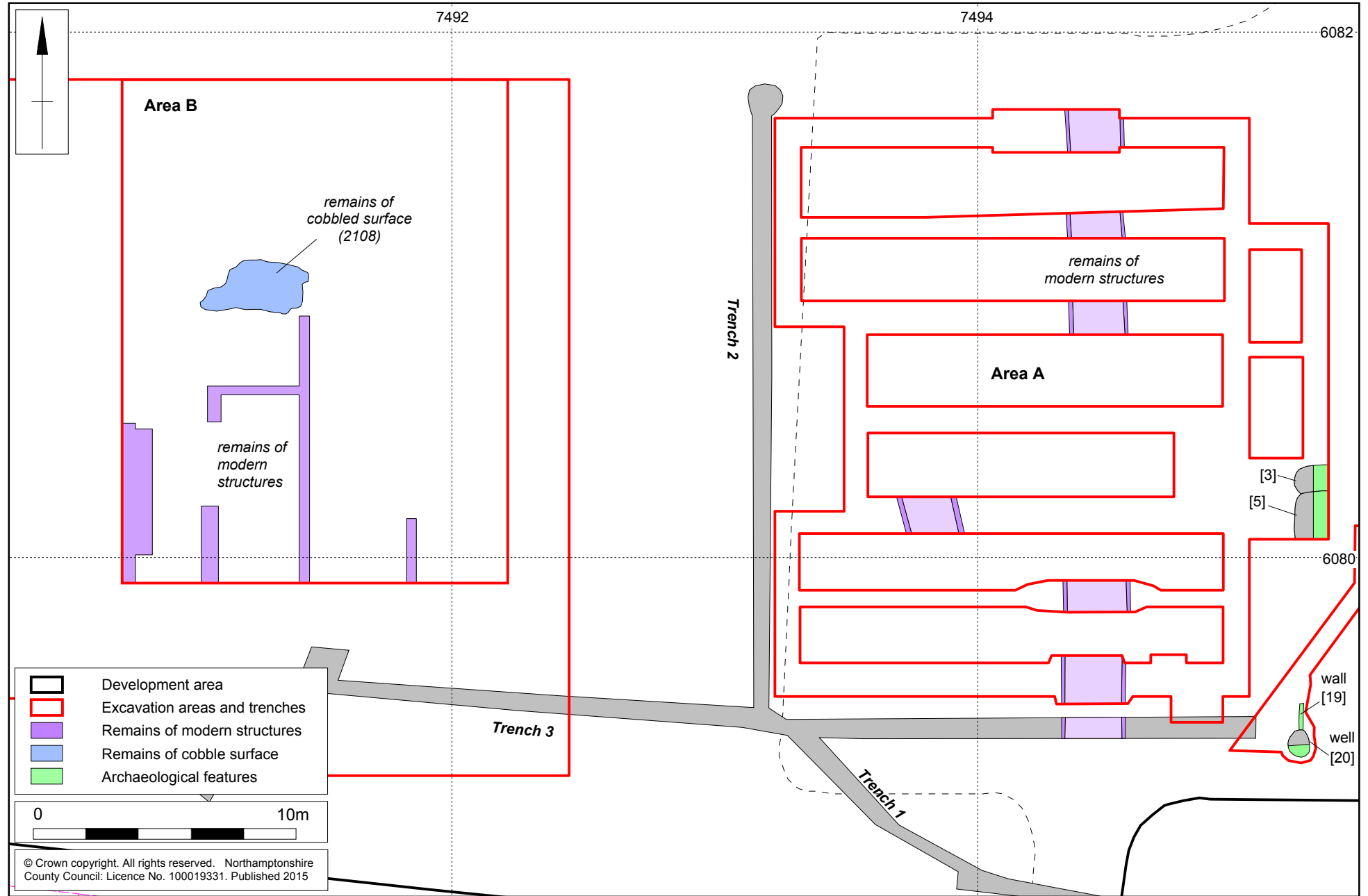
Pit [5] (Fig 8 and Fig 6, Section 3) was adjacent to pit [3] but the relationship between the two had been lost due to later disturbance. The feature was sub-circular and had been truncated on its southern edge by a modern pit [9]. Approximately 1.70m of its width was visible. Due to time constraints, only 0.4m of the feature was excavated but thirty two sherds of 12th century pottery were recovered from the fills. The feature appears to have been lined on its western edge with rough ironstone blocks.

Most of Area A has been disturbed by post-medieval building activity and large quantities of modern make up material up to 1.5m deep were observed. This material contained a large quantity of 20th century demolition waste, including reinforced concrete. This activity was not present in the south-eastern corner of the area, where ironstone natural was observed at 0.9m below ground level and where all the medieval features were encountered.

Scale 1:200 (A4)

Areas A and B, the excavated features

Fig 3



- Development area
- Excavation areas and trenches
- Remains of modern structures
- Remains of cobble surface
- Archaeological features



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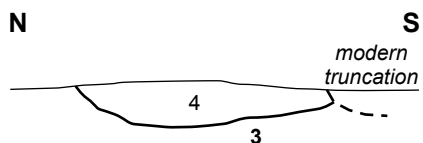


Wall [19] and well [20], facing east Fig 4

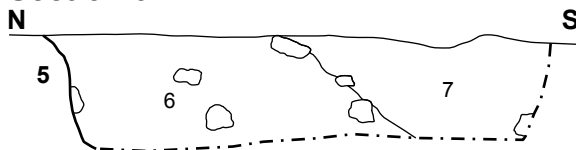


Well [20], facing south-east Fig 5

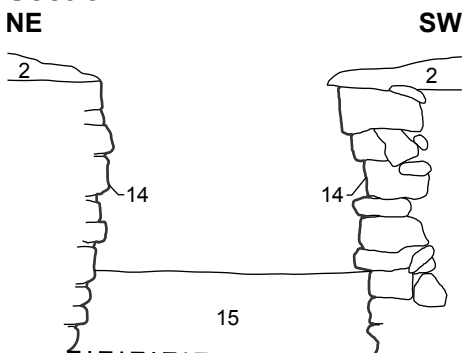
Section 1



54.47m aOD
Section 3



56.97m aOD
Section 4





Pit [3], facing east Fig 7



Pit [5], facing east Fig 8

4.2 Area B

Excavation in Area B (Figs 2 and 3) comprised the stripping of a 25m x 25m area in advance of the installation of the new all-weather court. The western half of Area B was stripped to a depth of 0.30m and identified a widespread layer of demolition rubble containing large quantities of modern brick, tile and glass. The eastern half of the area was stripped to a maximum depth of 0.60m in order to install an attenuation tank. The lower courses of several post-medieval walls aligned north to south were noted (Fig 9). A 1m wide cobbled surface running east to west was also noted slightly to the north of the structures (Fig 3).



Remains of post-medieval structure, facing east Fig 9

4.3 Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated in order to install service ducts from the existing school building (Fig 2). The trench ran approximately 30m from the building in a south-westerly direction before running another 30m to the west, parallel to Scarletwell Street. The trench was excavated using a mechanical excavator equipped with a 0.30m wide bucket to a maximum depth of 0.60m. Due to the narrow width of the trench it was not possible to identify features with any clarity but several large pieces of ironstone were removed during the excavation of the east-west portion of the trench, which may suggest the presence of structures fronting Scarletwell Street.

4.4 Trenches 2 and 3

Trenches 2 and 3 were excavated in order to install storm drains along the western and southern faces of the new building. A total length of 60m was excavated to a maximum depth of 2m with a width of 0.5m. The 20th century concrete structure that was observed in Area A was also present in trench 3 (Fig 3). No further archaeology was noted.

5 THE FINDS

5.1 The worked flint by Andy Chapman

Two flint flakes were recovered along with quantities of post-medieval material. The fill (6) of pit [5] contained a large flake, 59mm long by up to 34mm wide, in an opaque stony flint, mottled light grey in colour with small areas of white cortex remaining, and stepped fractures at the broader distal end. From the fill (17) of modern disturbance [16] there is the distal end of a small broken blade-like flake, 29mm long by 15mm wide, in light grey translucent flint, with white cortex surviving at the distal end. These pieces can only be broadly dated as probably belonging to the Neolithic/Bronze Age. The recovery of residual worked flint is not uncommon on sites in the western part of Northampton, within the presumed limits of the late Saxon town (RCHME 1985, fiche 322-323).

5.2 The pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 109 sherds with a total weight of 4,374g. It comprised a mixture of earlier medieval and modern wares, with the bulk of the assemblage comprising unstratified fragments of 19th century date. It was recorded using the conventions of the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (CTS), as follows:

F100: T1(1) type St. Neots Ware (AD850-1100), 1 sherd, 2g
F319: Lyveden/Stanion 'A' Ware (AD1150-1400), 1 sherd, 19g
F330: Shelly Coarseware (AD1100-1400), 45 sherds, 584g
F345: Oxford Ware (mid 11th-14th-centuries), 2 sherds, 15g
F360: Miscellaneous Sandy Coarsewares (AD1100-1400), 2 sherds, 7g
F410: Anglo-Dutch Tin-glazed Earthenware (17th – 18th century), 1 sherd, 10g
F426: Iron-Glazed Coarsewares (c.late 17th-18th centuries), 5 sherds, 514g
F1000: Miscellaneous 19th and 20th century wares. 53 sherds, 3223g

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in Northampton (eg. McCarthy 1979).

The medieval material comprises a typical group of 12th century wares. It is largely made up of unglazed shelly ware jars, one of which, from context (4), is very well-represented, along with a few fragments of bowls. Just two sherds of glazed pottery were noted, each from a different Oxford Ware tripod pitcher. These are very typical of the late 11th – 12th century (Mellor 1994). The only late Saxon pottery present was a single small sherd of residual St Neots Ware, suggesting that the site is located outside the boundaries of the *burh* of Northampton. Common medieval pottery of the 13th century and later, such as Potterspury Ware (fabric F329) is entirely absent.

The 19th century material is a fairly typical domestic assemblage of the period, but also includes a large fragment of a soup plate stamped "Royal Adelaide Gallery Grand Café A & S Gotti". The Royal Adelaide Gallery was, in the 1840s, an establishment on the Strand in London notable for its exhibitions of scientific and natural curiosities, which styled itself as the "National Gallery of Practical Science, Blending Instruction with Amusement" (Shaw, 1843). It was replaced by a marionette theatre in 1852.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Fill/Cut/Feature	F100		F330		F345		F360		F319		F410	
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)
Unstratified	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4/[3] pit	1	2	10	278	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6/[5] pit	-	-	10	137	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7/[5] pit	-	-	22	146	2	15	2	7	-	-	-	-
9/[8] pit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10/layer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15/layer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17/modern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18/layer	-	-	2	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21/[20] well	-	-	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1803/layer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	19	1	10
Total	1	2	45	584	2	15	2	7	1	19	1	10

Fill/Cut/Feature	F426		F1000		Date
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	
Unstratified	2	212	14	2646	Unstratified
4/[3] pit	-	-	-	-	12th century
6/[5] pit	-	-	-	-	12th century
7/[5] pit	-	-	-	-	12th century
9/[8] pit	-	-	3	35	19th century
10/layer	-	-	1	129	19th century
15/layer	2	269	12	130	19th century
17/modern	1	33	14	231	19th century
18/layer	-	-	-	-	12th century
21/[20] well	-	-	-	-	12th century
1803/layer	-	-	9	52	19th century
Total	5	514	53	3223	

5.3 The tile and brick by Pat Chapman

Two sherds and one fragment of roof tile from layer (1803), weigh 144g. They are made from orange sandy clay with occasional small fragments of ironstone. One sherd is 15mm thick, curved, and most likely from a ridge tile; the other sherd, 10mm thick, comes from a flat tile.

The brick, weighing 166g, from context (9) pit [8] comprises two small joining sherds from a wire-cut brick made with fine sandy orange clay with a grey core.

The brick is 19th-century in date and the tile could be contemporary, possibly a little earlier.

5.4 The other finds by Tora Hylton

Metal finds

There are two small finds; a bronze penny and a corroded iron object were recovered from deposits associated with the well [20]. The penny is exceedingly corroded and therefore illegible. The iron object is covered in corrosion products, but its shape suggests that it may be a blade and tang from a scale-tang knife.

Clay tobacco-pipes

A small group of 10 clay tobacco-pipe fragments were recovered, comprising one complete pipe-bowl and nine stem fragments. The pipe bowl was recovered from loose backfill material in the vicinity of Scarletwell Street [1803] and it has been classified according to Oswald's simplified typology using bowl and foot/spur forms (1975, 37-41). Typologically it equates to Oswald's type G24 which dates to the early 19th century date (c.1810-1840). The bowl is ornamented with a line of leaves covering the front and rear seams.

The stem fragments were located within a modern disturbance [16]. The stems measure up to 132mm in length and one fragment still retains a mouth piece. Two of the stems display signs of burning, one stem has a curved profile, perhaps suggesting that it is a waster and one fragment has a lump of a sandy mortar like substance adhering to the surface, possibly indicating that it originates from a kiln muffle. Evidence for clay tobacco-pipe manufacture is of interest, since Robert Moore in his work on Northamptonshire clay tobacco-pipes and makers (1980) provides a list of Northampton pipe makers that are mentioned in various registers, wills and documents. This list indicates that clay tobacco-pipes were manufactured by the Roberts family in Scarletwell Street (No 63) for nearly 100 years, c.1831-c.1920.

5.5 The animal bone by Adam Reid

A total of 403g of animal bone was hand collected from four different contexts during the course of excavation. This material was assessed to determine the level of preservation, the taxa present and to inform on the potential for further work.

Method

All material was washed prior to analysis. Identifiable bones were noted, and were examined for signs of butchery and the state of epiphyseal fusion. Identifications took place with the aid of the MOLA Northampton reference collection and Hillson (1992) and France (2009) were also consulted. Specimens that could not be positively identified were attributed, where possible, to categories including Large Mammal (Cattle, Horse), Medium Mammal (Sheep/Goat, Pig, Large Dog) and Small Mammal (Small Dog, Cat, Rabbit). No microfaunal specimens were noted. The English Heritage Guidelines for Best Practice for Animal Bones and Archaeology (2014) were followed, where possible.

Preservation

The state of preservation of the material was moderate, with moderate to severe surface abrasion and a high degree of fragmentation. No evidence of gnawing was noted on any of the specimens.

Identification and Quantification

The assemblage was highly fragmented but positive identifications were achieved for 26% of the material. A presentation of the results can be seen below (Table 2). The majority of the material was recovered from pit [5], which has been assigned a 12th-century date based on pottery evidence. One fragment of indeterminate fish bone was recovered from this feature.

Table 2: The identified taxa

Fill/cut type	Cattle <i>Bos</i>	Sheep/goat <i>Ovicaprid</i>	Pig <i>Sus</i>	Medium Mammal	Large Mammal	Indet Fish	Indet	Total
4/[3] pit	-	2	1	4	2	-	1	10
6/[5] pit	-	1	1	5	-	-	2	9
7/[5] pit	2	2	2	13	3	1	3	26
1803/layer	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	2	6	4	22	5	1	6	46

Conclusions

The small nature of the assemblage makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions, other than to say that the main domestic taxa were utilised at the site, and the material appears to derive from domestic waste, with no suggestions of industrial activity. The presence of well-preserved identifiable material from several of the excavated features indicates the possibility for future faunal analysis, should any further work take place.

6 DISCUSSION

The monitoring of works at Spring Lane Primary School identified heavily truncated activity from the medieval and post-medieval periods, with modern development throughout the 20th century.

6.1 Medieval occupation (12th century AD)

The work at Spring Lane identified 12th century activity in the vicinity of modern Scarletwell Street in the form of two pits and a well in addition to a short stretch of ironstone wall. The association between the wall and well suggests that the well was located on a plot boundary and may have been accessed from both plots. It is unclear whether it was initially constructed as a communal resource or whether the plot boundary was a subsequent addition. The finds assemblage recovered from these features appears domestic in nature and the pits and well are likely to relate to domestic occupation of the expanded medieval town during the 12th century AD.

6.2 Post-medieval town expansion

The records show that in the early 18th century the area was open farm land and into the mid 19th century orchards remained amongst the spreading tenements. This might suggest that there had been some later medieval or early post-medieval contraction of settlement in this area.

Evidence from the well backfill deposits suggests that it may have remained present and possibly in use until the 19th century when it was backfilled. A series of buildings fronting Scarletwell Street were erected in the second half of the 19th century with the whole plot developed by 1887 when the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map was produced. The school opened in 1874 as part of this expansion.

The clay tobacco pipe fragments recovered from the area close to Scarletwell Street appears to supplement the historical record, which indicates that at least one of the properties was used to manufacture clay tobacco pipe (Moore 1980).

The 1885 Ordnance Survey Town Plan indicates the presence of buildings in Area B, forming part of this late 19th century urban expansion and an overlay of the excavated evidence suggests that the cobbled surface is a path running directly behind the properties (Fig 10).

6.3 Modern redevelopment

Later development took place in the 20th century including modifications to the plots and properties and the expansion of the school. Large reinforced concrete slabs, observed in Area A (Figs 2 and 3), may have been associated with possible wartime shelters, their insertion had had a significant impact on areas of potential archaeological survival. Post-war expansion of the school site had also affected the plot layout with areas of significant recent disturbance present across much of the site relating both to the demolition of previous cellared structures and landscaping the school grounds.

Scale 1:500 (A4)

Ordnance Survey Town Plan of 1885, showing the excavation area

Fig 10



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