



Archaeological evaluation at Leicester Road Uppingham, Rutland August 2015

Report No. 15/159

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Illustrator: James Ladocha



**Archaeological evaluation at Leicester Road
Uppingham,
Rutland
August 2015**

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort-222728	
Project title	Archaeological evaluation at Leicester Road, Uppingham Rutland		
Short description	MOLA Northampton was commissioned to carry out an evaluation on land at Leicester Road, Uppingham, Rutland. Fourteen trenches were excavated; three had features of archaeological interest, which included a pit alignment and a ditch dating to the middle to late Iron Age. Three trenches contained a post-medieval to modern field boundary ditch and eight contained the remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Site Status			
Previous work	Geophysical survey		
Current land use	Arable		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Iron Age enclosure ditch and pit alignment		
Significant finds	pottery		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Rutland		
Site address	Leicester Road, Uppingham		
Post code	N/A		
OS co-ordinates	NGR SK 8577 0008		
Area (sq m/ha)	5.8 ha		
Height aOD	153-155 aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Richard Clark , Leicestershire County Council		
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting		
Director/Supervisor	Gemma Hewitt		
Project Managers	Adam Yates MOLA , Simon Mortimer CgMs		
Sponsor or funding body	Bloor Homes		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	05/08/2015		
End date	13/08/2015		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	MOLA Northampton store OAKRM:2015.11		
Paper		Site records	
Digital		Survey data, report, photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)		
Title	Archaeological Evaluation at Leicester Road, Uppingham, Rutland, August 2015		
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Author(s)	Gemma Hewitt		
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Archaeological evaluation at Leicester Road Uppingham, Rutland August 2015

Abstract

MOLA Northampton was commissioned to carry out an evaluation on land at Leicester Road, Uppingham, Rutland. Fourteen trenches were excavated; three had features of archaeological interest, which included a pit alignment and a ditch dating to the middle to late Iron Age. Three trenches contained a post-medieval to modern field boundary ditch and eight contained the remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Bloor Homes to carry out archaeological trial trenching at Leicester Road, Uppingham, Rutland (NGR SK 8577 0008; Fig 1).

All works were undertaken in accordance with *the National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012), Leicestershire County Council's '*Guidelines and procedures for archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland*' (1997), and following a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by CgMs Consulting (Thornton 2015).

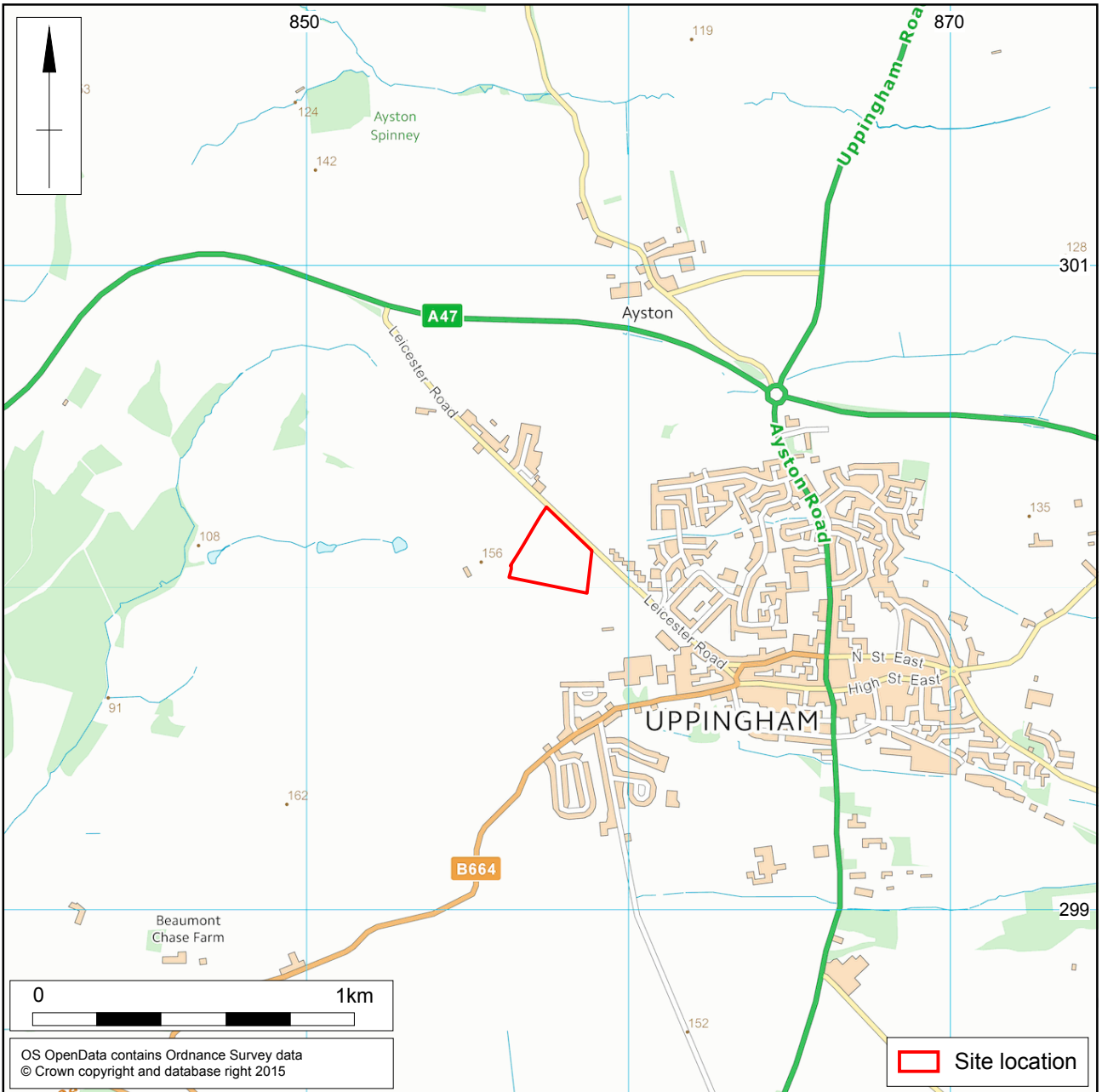
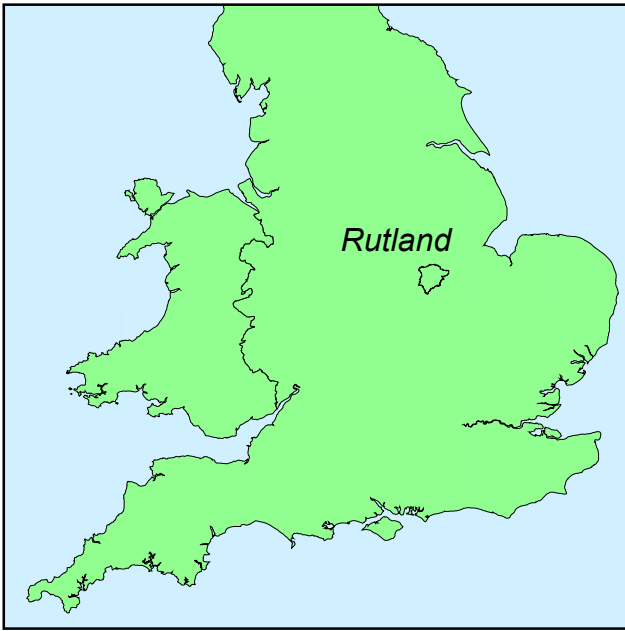
The programme of work will be conducted within the research parameters and objectives sent out by: *East Midlands Heritage: a research Agenda and Strategy for the historic Environment*, (Knight, D, et al 2012)

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The proposed development area comprises 5.8ha of arable farmland, on the western edge of Uppingham. It is bounded to the north-east by Leicester Road and field boundaries to the south-east, south and west. (NGR SK 8577 0008, Fig 1).

Topographically the site falls slightly from the western boundary from c.155m down to c.153m to the east.

The geological mapping for the area shows the underlying geology as Jurassic Sandstone, limestone and ironstone belonging to the Northampton stone formation across most of the site. The south-eastern area has a geology belonging to Grantham sandstone Formation comprising sandstone, siltstone and mudstone. The solid geology is overlain by diamicton till in the central part of the site.



Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the investigation was to determine if archaeological remains were present within the application area.

The specific objectives of the project were to provide further information on the following:

- The location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present at the proposed development site;
- The integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present at the proposed development site.

The project addressed the research aims and made reference to the following documents as appropriate:

- *East Midlands Heritage: a research Agenda and Strategy for the historic Environment*, (Knight, D, et al 2012)
- If applicable, reference will be made to the national framework for research, as set out by English Heritage (1997).

4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The first edition Ordnance Survey mapping shows the site to be subdivided into two separate fields, but otherwise its boundaries appear the same as the present day field with no building or other features present.

A geophysical survey (Lyll, in Thornton 2015) was undertaken to support the planning application and indicated features of archaeological interest including that of a pit alignment.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by ULAS (Tate 2005) at a site 750m north-west of the site and uncovered three undated ditches and a small assemblage of Mesolithic –Neolithic flints.

A number of significant finds and features have been recorded within the vicinity of the site, these include a spread of prehistoric flint (HER ref: MLE17299-17301, 19725-6) and a scattering of Roman material suggesting possible nearby settlement (MLE17303). These finds were all present within the fields to the west of the western border of the site. To the north of the site on the other side of Leicester Road, a large number of prehistoric finds and post-medieval pottery was recovered while field walking in the allotments (MLE 21023). Aerial photography for the area indicated a double ditch in the cropmarks within this field.

5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A programme of evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CgMs Consulting (Thornton 2015) in response to a request by the Leicestershire County Council's principal planning archaeologist (Richard Clark). This required the excavation of fourteen trenches, planned to investigate the potential impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains within the development area. Eleven trial trenches were 50m long and 2m wide and three were 5m long by 5m wide. In the event one of the 5mx5m trenches could not be excavated and was replaced by a 30mx4m trench (trench 12).

All trenches were set out using differential GPS (Leica Viva) operating to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m. The topsoil, subsoil and non-structural post-medieval and later deposits were removed by mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, to reveal significant archaeological remains or where these were absent, the natural substrates. All work was carried out under archaeological supervision, by a suitably qualified archaeologist

The excavation and recording were carried out in accordance with MOLA guidelines and all records were created using MOLA Northampton pro-forma (MOLA 2014). Photographs were taken of all trenches and all relevant deposits on 35mm monochrome print film and high resolution digital images. Work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and guidance: archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014).

The trenches were excavated to the top of the natural geological horizon or the upper archaeological levels, whichever was the highest.

Levels in metres above Ordnance Datum were established for all trenches and excavated features using a dumpy level and related to temporary benchmarks established using Leica Viva Global Positioning System (GPS). Artefacts were recovered from individual contexts and stored and packed according to type. All excavated areas and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

All records and materials will be compiled in a structured archive in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix 3 in the English Heritage procedural document, *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991).



Scale 1: 2000

Excavated trenches with geophysical survey results Fig 2

6 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

Archaeological features were recorded in three of the 14 excavated trenches (Trenches 1, 12 and 14). A post-medieval boundary ditch was located in three of the 14 trenches. The natural horizon across the majority of the site comprised Ironstone

Unless otherwise stated all recorded features cut the natural horizon and were sealed by subsoil. The subsoil was light to medium orange-brown silty clay with less than 5% small stones between 0.10m and 0.40m deep, sealed by a topsoil of mid brown friable, silty clay between 0.30m and 0.60m thick. Full context information is included in the appendix.

6.1 Trench 1

This trench, 50m long, 2.0m wide and 0.60m deep, aligned north to south was located towards the northern end of the development area (Fig 2).

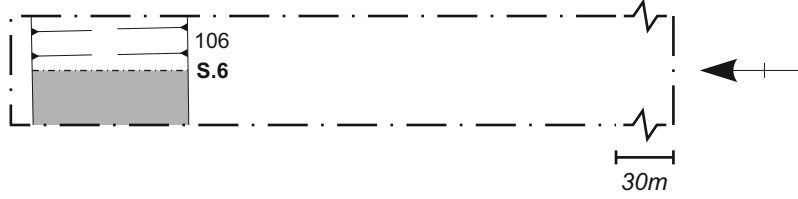
Ditch [106] lay towards the northern end of the trench and was aligned east-west. It had a wide V-shaped profile, 2.8m wide and 0.50m deep, with gentle sloping sides and a rounded base (Figs 3, 4 and 5 section 6). The basal fill (105) was loose, mid orange-brown, silty clay with flecks of charcoal, and contained 24 sherds of pottery dating to the middle-late Iron Age were recovered along with some sandstone quartz stones, which are not native to the site. The upper fill (104) was loose mid orange-brown silty clay, and contained no finds.



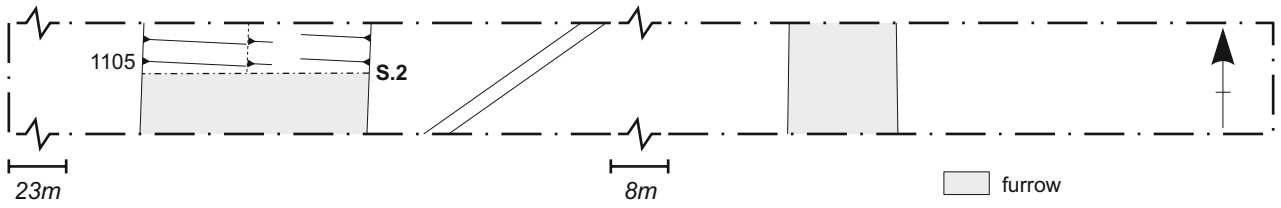
Trench 1, ditch [106] looking east

Fig 3

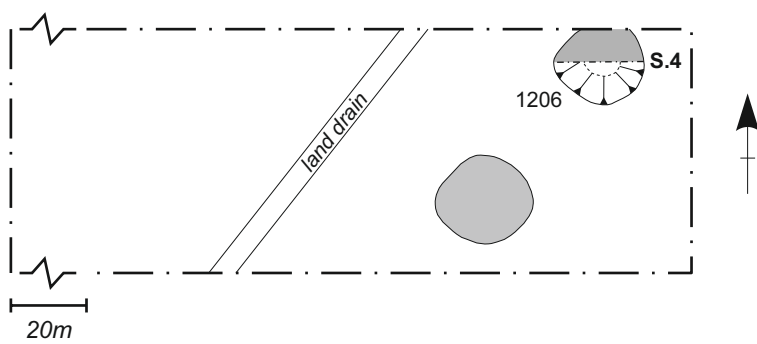
Trench 1



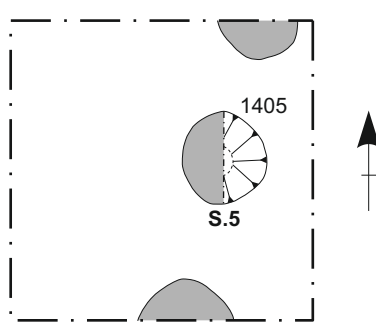
Trench 11



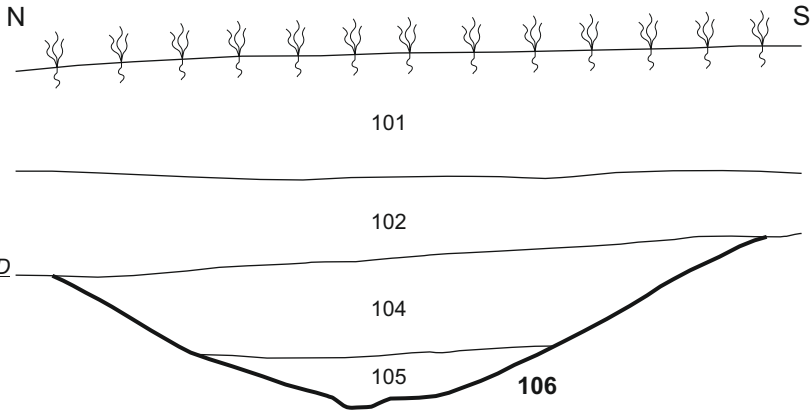
Trench 12



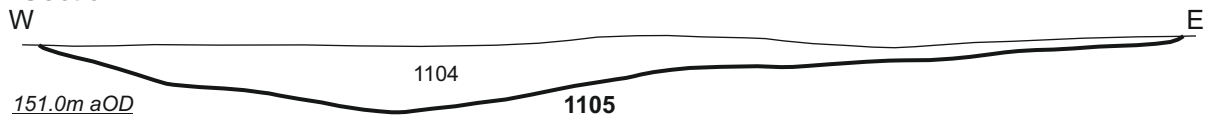
Trench 14



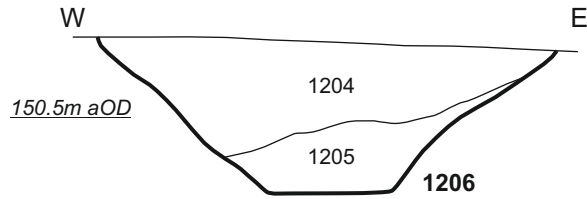
Section 6



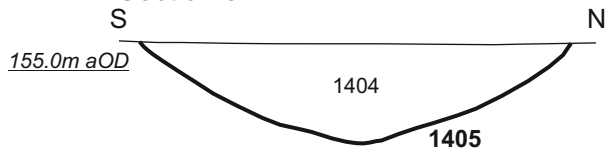
Section 2



Section 4



Section 5



Scale 1:25

Ditch 106, furrow 1105, and pits 1206 and 1405 Fig 5

6.2 Trenches 12 and 14: the pit alignment

The geophysical survey located a sinuous pit alignment, aligned near north-south and apparently extending across the entire field, although indistinct to the south (Fig 2). These features may date to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age, although some were still open into the middle Iron Age.

Trenches 11 and 13 intersected the pit alignment but no pits were observed in these trenches.

Trench 12 was repositioned, as the proposed location would have blocked access into the field. The new location was further to the south and the length was shortened to 30m by 4m wide.

Two pits of the pit alignment, spaced 1.6m apart and 3.0m centre-to-centre, lay at the eastern end of Trench 12 (Fig 4). Pit [1206] and the adjacent pit were sub-circular, perhaps originally sub-square, in plan, 1.50m diameter by 0.50m deep, with a broad flat base and moderately steep sides, with heavily eroded upper edges. The primary fill (1205) was friable mid brown-grey silty clay with frequent small stones, while the upper fill (1204) was friable mid brown-orange silty clay, with sparse stones (Fig 5, Section 4). One small sherd of pottery from fill (1205) was in a similar fabric to some of the small assemblage of middle-late Iron Age pottery from the site but was otherwise undiagnostic. The second pit in trench 12, which has been left unexcavated, was of similar plan form.



Trench 12, pit [1206], looking north

Fig 6

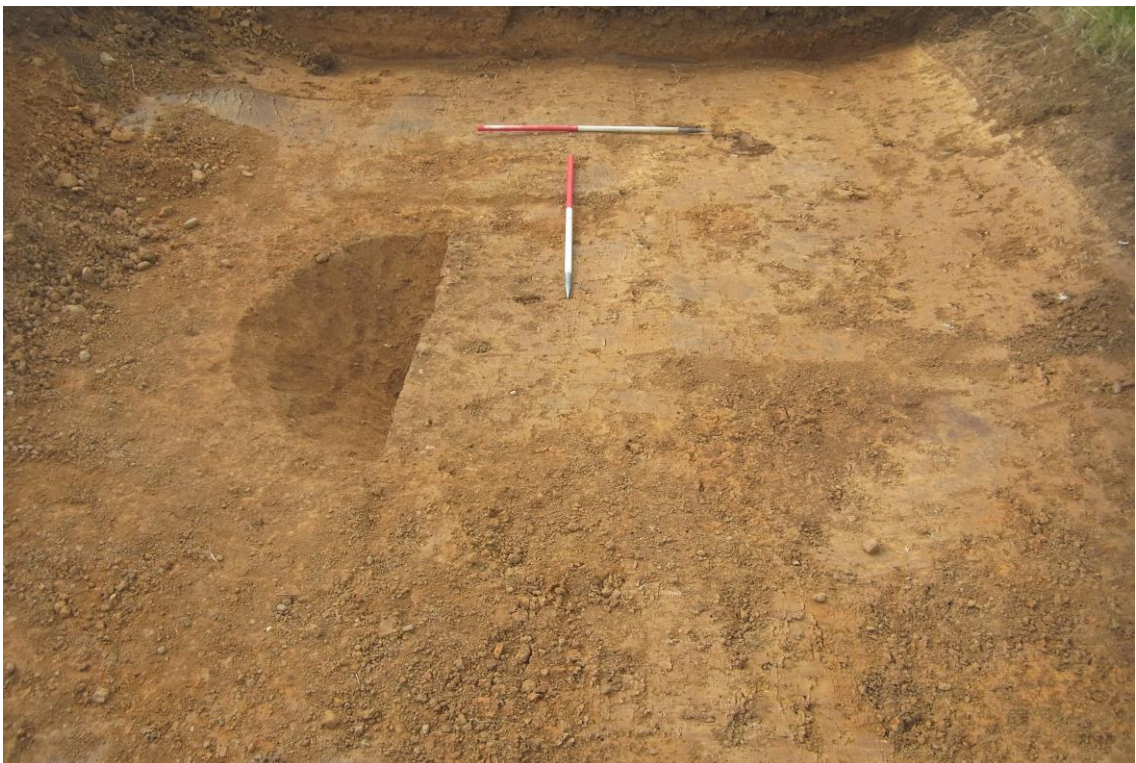
Trench 14, measuring 5m by 5m lay towards the southern boundary of the field, positioned over the pit alignment, and parts of three pits were present were spaced between 1.3m and 1.0m apart. Pit [1405] was sub-circular, up to 1.43m in diameter, but only 0.32m deep, with a concave base (Fig 5, Section 5). The fill (1404) was light grey-brown silty clay, and contained no finds.

The contrast in depth and profile between the pits in trenches 12 and 14 might suggest that there has been considerable truncation of the ground level at the southern end of the field, and this might explain why the pits are much fainter on the geophysical survey in this southern area.



Trench 14 pit [1405] looking west

Fig 7

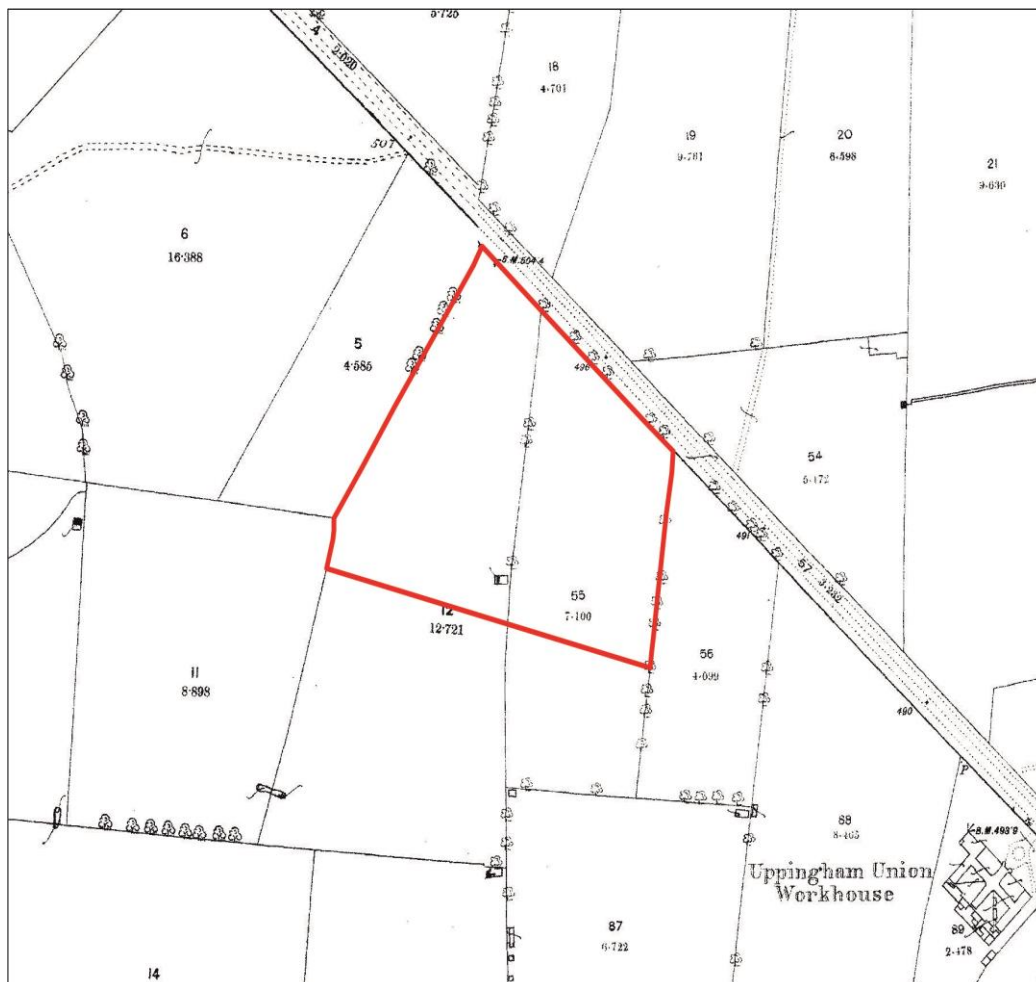


Trench 14 pit [1405] general view, looking south

Fig 8

6.3 Trenches 4, 5 and 8

Three trenches, all aligned west-east, crossed a boundary ditch which can be seen on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps for the area, but had been removed by the 1980s. The boundary runs north-south dividing the field into two. The fills of the ditches were dark grey-brown silty clay and contained 60% rooting and cut through the subsoil of the trenches. None of these were excavated (Fig 9).



1885 Ordnance Survey map of Leicester Road, Uppingham,
showing the old field boundary Fig 9

6.4 Trenches 2 to 8 and 11

These trenches all contained remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, which could also be seen on the geophysical survey. All the furrows ran north to south through most of the site apart from those in trench 6 which ran west to east. A sample section was excavated in trench 11 and was 3.85m wide by 0.20m deep (Fig 4, section 2, Figs 5 and 10) A number of land drains were also present within these trenches. These were also identified on the geophysical survey (Fig 2).



Trench 11 furrow, looking south

Fig 10

7 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 The prehistoric pottery by Andy Chapman

The fill (105) of ditch [106] produced 24 sherds, weighing 83g, of hand-built pottery, in both sandy and shelly fabrics, dating to the middle/late Iron Age, and there was a single sherd, weighing 4g, in the sandy fabric, from the fill (1205) of pit [1206], part of the pit alignment, that may be broadly contemporary. In addition, there were three small lumps of fired clay, weighing 13g from the fill (105) of ditch [106] and three small pieces weighing 2.5g from the fill (1205) of pit [1206].

Fabrics

- 1 Sandy, with fine quartz grains the dominant inclusion, 11 sherds, 56g.
(Probably Leicestershire Fabric (Q1))
- 2 Soft fabric containing voids, probably from leached inclusions of crushed shell, 14 sherds, 31g (Leicestershire Fabric group S)

The sherds in the sandy fabric all have a uniformly grey core and inner surface, with the outer surface ranging from pale brown, through orange-brown to grey. The sherds in the soft sandy fabric have light grey to dark grey cores and internal surfaces, with the majority having light brown to orange-brown external surfaces.

Forms and decoration

From the fill (105) of ditch [106] there is single small rim sherd, in the sandy fabric, with a flatted rim, which is a characteristic form in middle Iron Age assemblages. The two largest body sherds, one sandy and one shelly, are decorated with broad roughly parallel scored lines (Fig 11). There is also a single abraded body sherd, in the sandy fabric that has a remnant of incised cross-lattice decoration (Fig 12).



Scored ware sherds from ditch [106]
(Scale 10mm)

Fig 11



Incised cross-lattice decoration on body sherd from ditch [106] Fig 12
(Scale 10mm)

Chronology

The flattened rim and the scored body sherds are all characteristic of pottery assemblages of the middle Iron Age, although the cross-hatched lattice is more unusual and may suggest a continuation into the late Iron Age, perhaps 2nd-1st centuries BC.

7.2 The environmental evidence by Val Fryer

Introduction and method statement

Samples for the retrieval of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from a fill within ditch [107] (context 106 sample 1) and the fill of pit [1207] (context 1206, sample 2).

The samples were bulk floated by MOLA Northampton and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed below in Table 1. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (2010). All plant remains were charred. Modern roots, seeds and arthropod remains were common within both assemblages.

Results

The recovered assemblages are both extremely small (ie <0.1 litres in volume) and sparse, although charcoal/charred wood fragments are moderately abundant. Plant macrofossils are only recorded at an extremely low density within the assemblage from ditch [106], which contains wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grain and a spelt wheat (*T. spelta*) glume base. Both are fragmented and abraded. Other materials include a small fragment of black porous material (a probable residue of the combustion of organic remains at a very high temperature) and a small piece of coal.

Conclusions

In summary, the limited nature of the assemblages and the poor condition of the remains almost certainly indicate that the material is largely derived from scattered or wind-dispersed refuse, which was accidentally incorporated within the feature fills. Cereal processing probably was occurring somewhere nearby, but little more can be deduced.

As plant remains are so scarce, no further analysis is recommended. However, a summary of this assessment should be included within any publication of data from the site.

Table 1: Charred plant macrofossils and other remains

Sample No.	1	2
Context	106	1206
Feature	107	1207
Type	Ditch	Pit
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grain)	x	-
<i>T. spelta</i> L. (glume base)	-	x
Charcoal <2mm	xxxx	xxxx
Charcoal >2mm	xxx	xx
Charcoal >5mm	x	x
Black porous 'cokey' material	x	-
Small coal frag.	x	-
Sample volume (litres)	10	10
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1	<0.1
% flot sorted	100%	100%

Key:

x = 1 – 10 specimens; xx = 11 – 50 specimens; xxx = 51 – 100 specimens;
xxxx = 100+ specimens

8 CONCLUSIONS

A number of features of archaeological interest have been identified during the evaluation. This confirmed the findings of the geophysical survey (Fig 2).

A length of ditch dated to the middle to late Iron Age was identified in trench 1, towards the northern end of the development area.

The pit alignment has been shown to run the full length of the field, at least 136m and comprising pits some 2.4-3.0m apart centre to centre. It is possible that the pits in the northern area are better preserved, surviving at least 0.5m deep, while to the south they may have been more heavily truncated. As typical of pit alignments they rarely contained any quantity of diagnostic finds.

Nine of the trenches contained furrows of truncated medieval ridge and furrow field cultivation, and land drains, which were also located on the geophysical survey.

A boundary ditch present in three trenches can be seen on Ordnance Survey maps of the area from the 1st edition till the 1980s (Fig 9).

No evidence for the NW-SE aligned anomalies shown on the geophysical survey were present, in any of the trenches that were positioned across them, despite the trenches being cleaned and given time to weather out. It is possible that these reflect the underlying geological condition, and do not appear in any case to be archaeological in origin.

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MOLA Northampton

30th September 2015

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
1	N-S 40mx2m	485750,300233	152.11	151.51
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay. <40% rooting.	0.40m	-
102	Subsoil	Light orange- brown silty clay. <10% fine roots.	0.20m	-
103	Natural	Orange ironstone	-	-
104	Fill of [106]	Upper fill of [106] light-mid orangy brown silty clay. Few small stones <5% of fill.	W:2.30m D:0.20m	
105	Fill of [106]	Lower fill of [106] light-mid orange-brown <10% charcoal	W:1.20m D:0.36m	Sample 1 Middle-late Iron Age pottery
106	Ditch	Wide V shape profile with a rounded base	W;2.30m D:0.56m	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
2	N-S 50mx2m	485695, 300158	153.05	152.45
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with <5% small stones.	0.60m	-
202	Natural	Ironstone, loose layer on top orange.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
3	S-N 50mx2m	485724,300160	153.80	153.25
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with <5% small stones.	0.55m	-
302	Natural	Ironstone, loose layer on top orange.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
4	W-E 50mx2m	485751,300163	60.96	60.36
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
401	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with <5% small stones.	0.52m	-
402	Natural	Light yellow -orange sandy clay with <5% fleck of ironstone	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
5	W-E 50mx2m	485742,300130		
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
501	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with <5% small stones.	0.40m	-
502	Natural	Ironstone, loose layer on top orange.	-	-
503	Fill of [504]	Light brown sandy clay with black and dark grey and charcoal flecks.	L 0.40m W 0.34m D0.03m	
504	Tree hole	Irregular sided and base	L 0.40m W 0.34m D0.03m	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
6	N-S 50mx2m	485663,300084	154.48	153.92
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
601	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay <1% fine rooting <5% small irregular stones.	0.50m	-
602	Natural	Ironstone, loose on surface then solid underneath turning into solid ironstone further north you go.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
7	W-E 50mx2m	485695,300071	153.99	153.54
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
701	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with <5% small stones	0.45m	-
702	Natural	Start off like 1102 then changes to 902 about half way.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
8	W-E 50mx2m	485717,300031	152.56	152.16
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
801	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with <5% small stones	0.40m	-
802	Natural	Same as 1101 natural change towards the east to ironstone like that of 902.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
9	N-S 50mx2m	485841,300133	151.60	151.10
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
901	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with <5% small stones.	0.50m	-
902	Natural	Ironstone loose layer on top of orange.	-	-
903	Fill of [904].	Firm dark brown/dark grey reddish clay with small ironstones and gravel stones.	L 0.21m W 0.30m D 0.08m	-
904	Tree hole	Irregular profile and base	L 0.21m W 0.30m D 0.08m	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
10	N-S 50mx2m	485807,300087	151.98	151.68
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1001	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with <5% small stones.	0.30m	-
1002	Natural	Ironstone loose layer on top of orange.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
11	W-E 50mx2m	485798,300020	150.99	150.49
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1101	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with <5% small stones.	0.40m	-
1102	Subsoil	Mid-light silty clay with <5% small pebbles.	0.10m	-
1103	Natural	Orange and red ironstone.	-	-
1104	Fill of [1105]	Furrow, firm brown clay with gravel and ironstones.	W 3.84m D 0.22m	
1105	Furrow	Gently sloping sides with an uneven base	W 3.84m D 0.22m	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
12	30mx4m	485825,300069	151.64	151.14
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1201	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay. <40% rooting.	0.10m	-
1202	Subsoil	Light orangy brown silty clay. <10% fine roots.	0.40m	-
1203	Natural	Orange ironstone.	-	-
1204	Fill of [1206]	Upper fill, mid brown orange, silty clay <10% small stones.	W:1.50m D:0.40m	-
1205	Fill of [1206]	Lower fill of pit <30% small stones of pit.	W:0.70m D:0.25m	Sample 2 Iron Age pottery
1206	Pit	Circular eroded edge with board bade	W:1.50m D:0.65m	-

trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
13	5mx5m	485828,300044	151.62	150.92
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
1301	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay. <40% rooting.	0.20m	-
1302	Subsoil	Light brown silty clay.	0.20m	-
1303	Hillwash	Light yellow-brown silty sand with lots (<40%) ironstones.	0.30m	-
1304	Natural	Ironstone.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	height of natural
14	5mx5m	485581,300001	151.75	151.05
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
1401	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay. <40% rooting.	0.30m	-
1402	Subsoil	Mid-light silty clay with <5% small pebbles.	0.40m	-
1403	Natural	Ironstone	-	-
1404	Fill of [1405]	Light grey/light brown sandy/silty clay with ironstones and gravel.	W 1.43m D 0.32m L 1.30m	-
1405	Pit	Circular, shallow sloping sides	W 1.43m D 0.32m L 1.30m	-



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