



Archaeological strip, map and record excavation at Weldon Park, Corby, Northamptonshire August to November 2015

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Illustrator: James Ladocha



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort1-232586	
Project title	Archaeological strip, map and record excavation at Weldon Park, Corby, Northamptonshire, August and November 2015		
Short description	MOLA Northampton carried out two strip, map and record operations at Weldon Park, Corby. The first targeted an area (AAS2) that had been evaluated in 2009 when a number of possible linear features were identified. Although the strip, map and sample excavation found one possible ditch and a small posthole, both undated, the remaining features turned out to be furrows. The second area was situated directly north of Oundle Road and was excavated in order to allow developers to take subsoil for use elsewhere on site. This area had also been evaluated in 2009 with no archaeological features being found. Only the initial stages of the stripping were observed since the area did not form one of the Areas of Archaeological Significance and no archaeological features were present.		
Project type	Strip Map and Record		
Previous work	Trial trench evaluation (Jones 2009), Geophysical survey (GSB 2007)		
Current land use	Arable land		
Future work	Evaluation work at AAS3 and in remaining fields. Excavation at AAS1		
Monument type and period	Possible medieval furrows and a Roman ditch		
Significant finds	-		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Oundle Road, Weldon, Corby		
Post code	NN17 3JU		
OS co-ordinates	SP 935 897		
Area (sq m/ha)	c 80ha		
Height aOD	c 85 to 100m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Corby Borough Council		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	James Fairclough and Chris Jones, MOLA		
Project Managers	Mark Holmes, MOLA		
Sponsor or funding body	Persimmon Homes		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	3 August 2015 and 4 November 2015		
End date	28 August 2015 and 11 November 2015		
ARCHIVES		Location	Contents
Physical	MOLA Northampton store WOR.2015	-	-
Paper		-	Site records
Digital		-	Survey data, report, photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)			
Title	Archaeological strip, map and record operations at Weldon Park, Corby, Northamptonshire, August/November 2015		
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton report 15/214		
Author(s)	James Fairclough		
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Archaeological strip, map and record excavation at Weldon Park, Corby, Northamptonshire August and November 2015

Abstract

MOLA Northampton carried out two strip, map and record operations at Weldon Park, Corby. The first targeted an area (AAS2) that had been evaluated in 2009 when a number of possible linear features were identified. Although the strip, map and sample excavation found one possible ditch and a small posthole, both undated, the remaining features turned out to be furrows. The second area was situated directly north of Oundle Road and was excavated in order to allow developers to take subsoil for use elsewhere on site. This area had also been evaluated in 2009 with no archaeological features being found. Only the initial stages of the stripping were observed since the area did not form one of the Areas of Archaeological Significance and no archaeological features were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

Corby Borough Council has granted planning permission (09/00083) to Persimmon Homes for a mixed use development at Weldon Park, Corby (NGR SP 935897; Fig 1). The development occupies an area of approximately 80ha, most of which is under arable cultivation. It is sited on a north-west facing slope overlooking the Willow Brook which itself is situated towards the north-west boundary of the site.

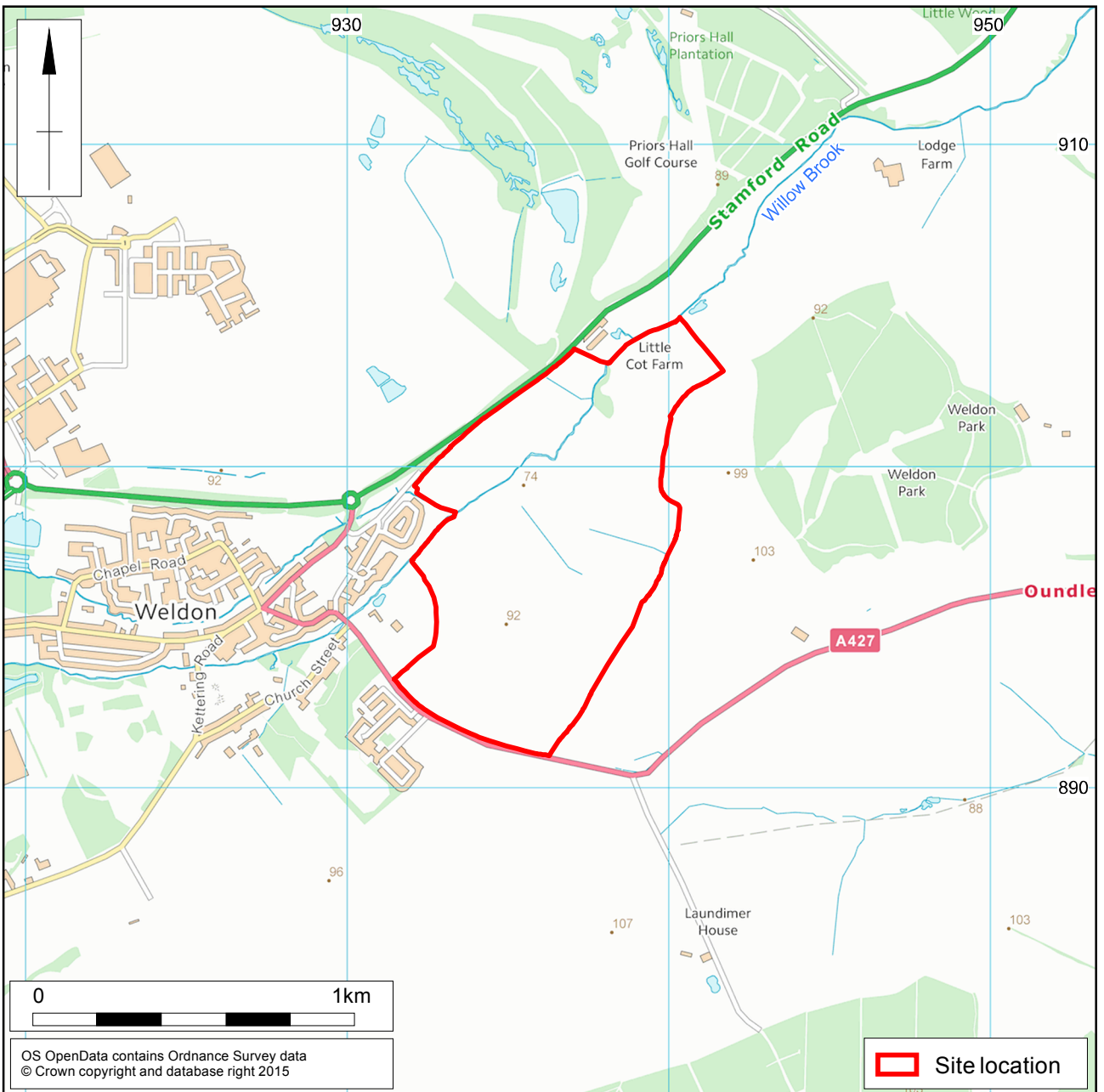
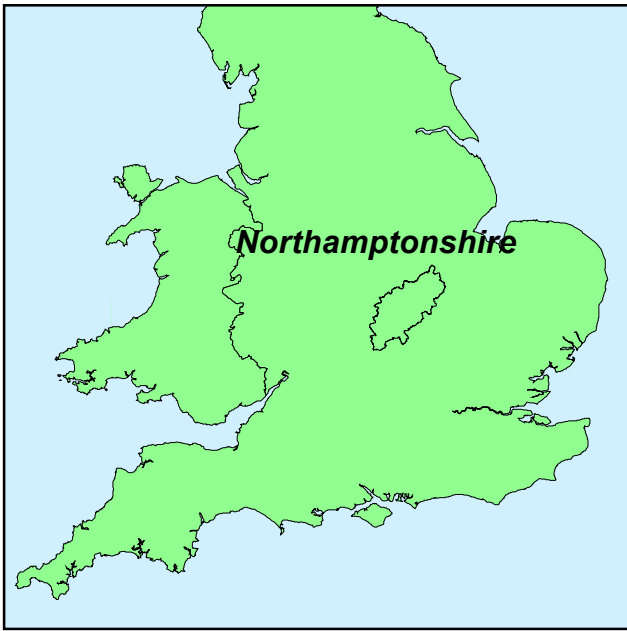
A Scheme of Archaeological Resource Management (SARM) was produced by MOLA Northampton in July 2015 (MOLA 2015) and approved by the County Archaeological Advisor. This included details for further work in known areas of interest produced by the 2009 evaluation (Jones 2015) as well as a scheme of archaeological geophysical survey and trial trenching in an area of the development that had not previously been evaluated (MOLA 2015, 11-14).

The SARM identified three Areas of Archaeological Significance (AAS) which required further archaeological investigation. Area AAS2 was positioned to further investigate features discovered in trenches 11, 12 and 15 during the 2009 evaluation. Since AAS2 was going to be subject to development works an archaeological Strip Map and Record operation was undertaken in August 2015.

A second Strip Map and Record operation was undertaken in November 2015. This was carried out where Persimmon Homes were due to strip and area of c0.7ha for subsoil to be used elsewhere on the development. This area was located in the north-east corner of a field directly north of Oundle Road which had already been evaluated in 2009. However, no trenches had been excavated in this location.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The higher ground at the south of the site comprises Rutland Formation Argillaceous Rocks overlain by Oadby Member glacial material. A stream valley has exposed a sequence of Upper Lincolnshire Limestone, Grantham Formation sand and siltstones and Northamptonshire Sand Formation Ironstone. More recent alluvial material presents a superficial deposit immediately adjacent to the stream (BGS 2014).



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 as follows:

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

The information provided by the SMR (Strip, Map and Record) will assist in determining the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. These factors will be used to determine the significance of the site in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF).

4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There were no designated archaeological monuments or listed buildings within the development boundaries. Previous archaeological work within the development area comprised; a desk-based assessment (Dawson 2007) geophysical surveys (ASC 2005 a & b, GSB 2007) and trial trenching (Jones 2009).

The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) lists the following monuments within or immediately adjacent to the development area:

Table 1: Northamptonshire HER data

PREFREF	NAME
6724	Possible Post-Medieval Industrial Activity
6725	Possible Post-Medieval hermitage site
7231	WWII military site
2659/0/27	Quarry Pits (RFP Survey)
2659/0/28	Quarry Pits (RFP Survey)
7231/0/1	WWII crash site
8649/0/1	WWII Weldon Road Block
9031/0/1	WWII Weldon Searchlight Battery

The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment concluded that although the development area was situated within an area of significant archaeological evidence for the prehistoric and Roman periods there was no known significant archaeological evidence within the development area itself (Dawson 2007, 5).

The initial geophysical surveys combined scanning reconnaissance with detailed gradiometry survey. A total of approximately 39ha was covered by the detailed survey which revealed possible undated enclosures, former field boundaries and other more undefined anomalies possibly having a natural, modern or agricultural

origin. Two ferrous responses were interpreted as debris from the World War II bomber which was known to have crashed in the fields around Weldon in 1944 (HER 7231/0/1)(GSB 2007, 1).

The subsequent geophysical survey of the evaluation area next to where the SMR investigation took place was undertaken in September 2015. Preliminary analysis of the data suggests that there were few anomalies of archaeological significance present.

The trial trenching in 2009 sampled the development area to the north-west with more detailed coverage where the geophysical survey had identified potential archaeological features. In the event the trenching confirmed the geophysical survey results which had indicated that there was no major concentration of archaeological remains. However, three of the trenches identified ditches indicating Roman activity in the western part of the area. The presence of some possible middle Saxon pottery in the upper fills of one of these ditches also suggested early-medieval activity in the vicinity. A single pit of Roman date was located at the north of the site.

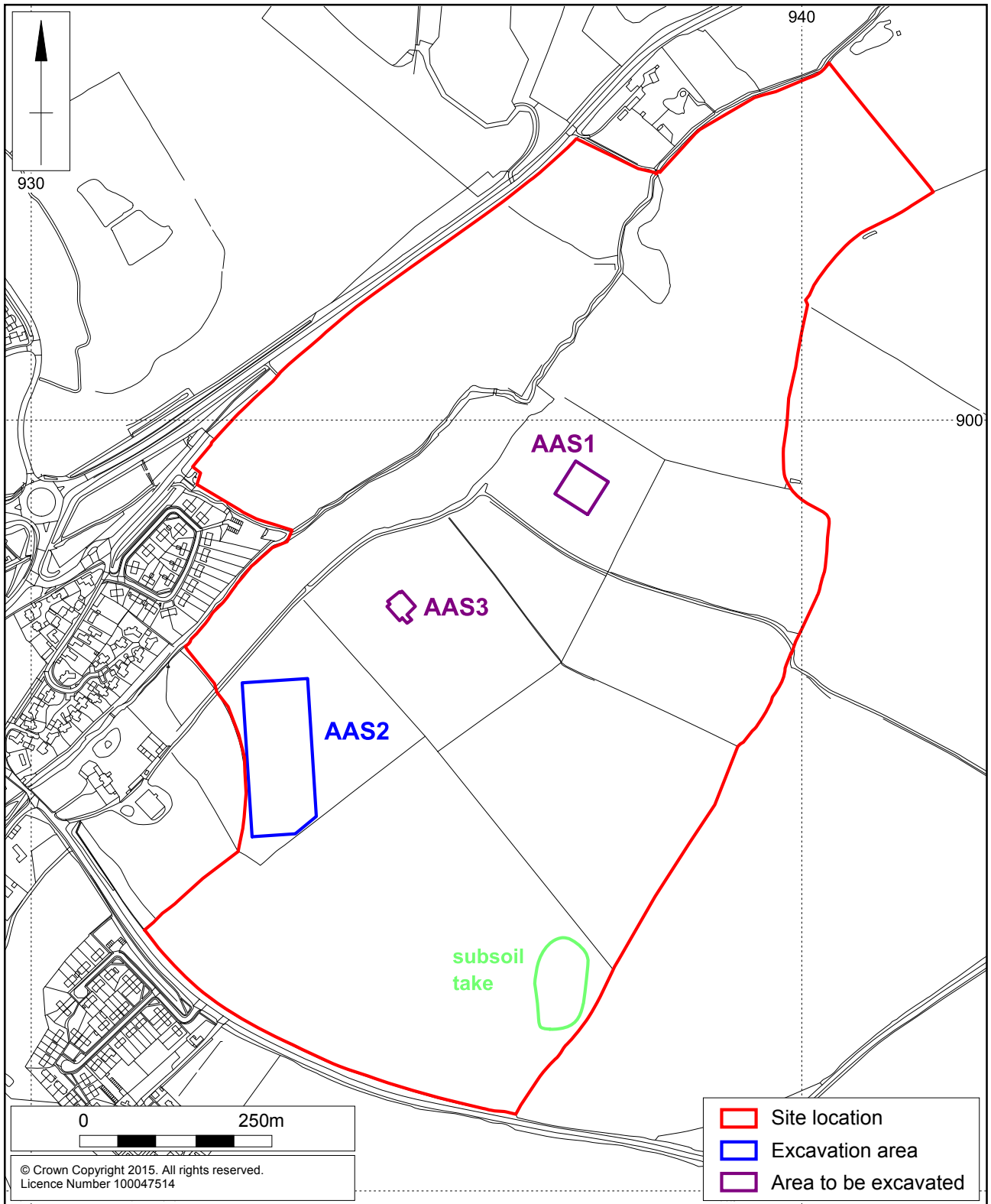
5 METHODOLOGY

Soil stripping took place using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. This was monitored at all times by an experienced archaeologist. Sufficient time was allowed to sample and record any archaeological features exposed. All works conformed to relevant Chartered Institute for Archaeology and Heritage England standards and guidelines (CIfA 2014a and 2014b, HE 2015).

The areas were excavated to the top of the natural geological horizon or the upper archaeological levels, whichever was the highest. Once areas were stripped, no machinery was allowed to move across them until they had been given the 'all-clear' by the on-site archaeologist in consultation with the County Archaeological Advisor.

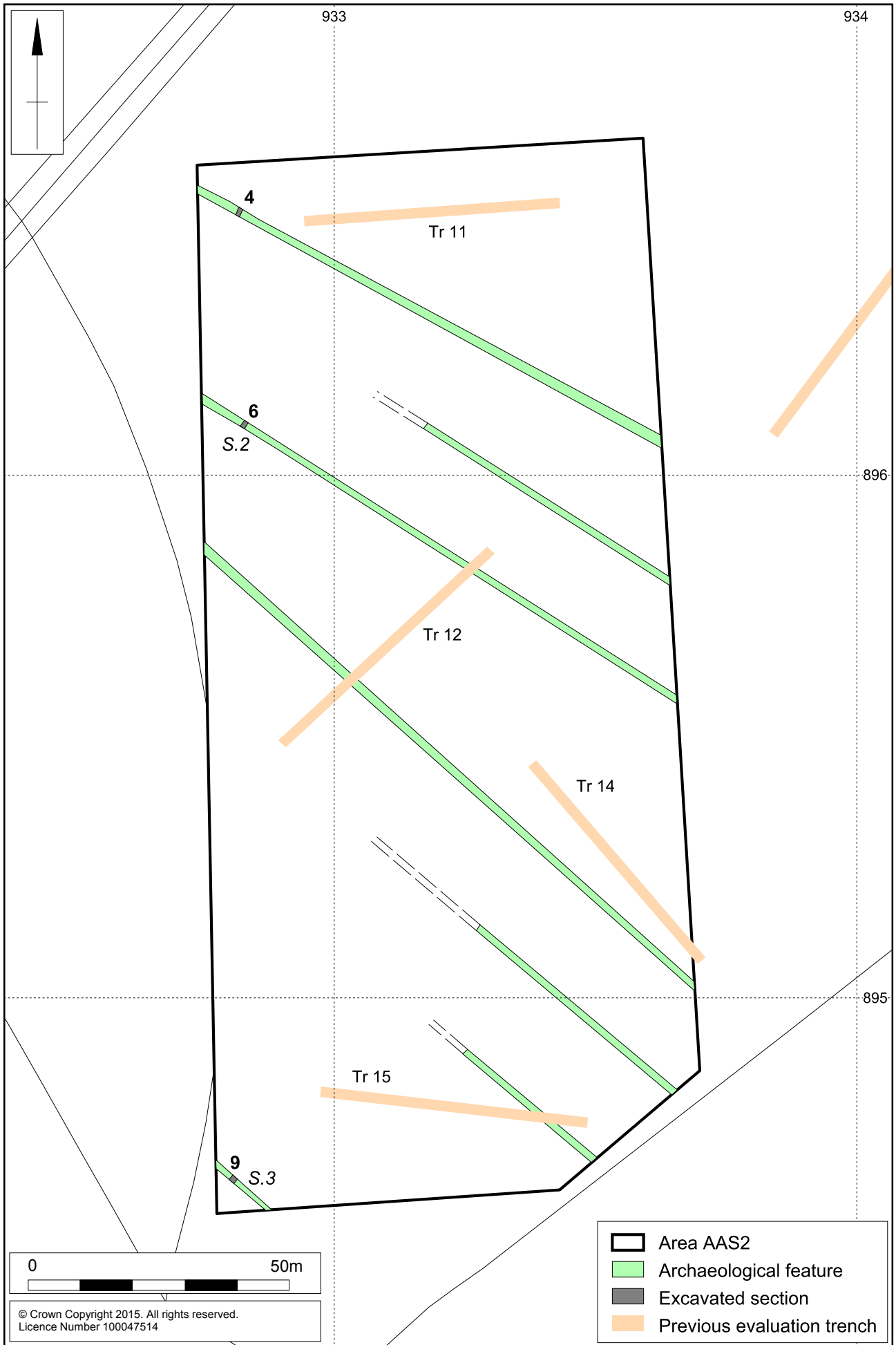
Areas with archaeological features were cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features and plotted on a survey grade GPS (Leica Viva) operating to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m to produce a base plan.

Archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of excavation were fully recorded, following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All contexts were described on pro-forma sheets including a detailed description, stratigraphic relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. A monochrome photographic record was maintained supplemented by high resolution digital photography. Overall shots of each area were taken together with detailed shots of individual features and feature groups where appropriate. All records and materials have been compiled in a structured archive in accordance with current guidelines (Brown 2011 and NARC 2014).



Scale 1: 7,500

Excavation areas Fig 2



Scale 1: 1000

Plan of AAS2 Fig 3

6 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

6.1 AAS2

The general stratigraphy of this area was made up of light mottled orange/grey sand and clay natural deposits overlain by a light brown clay sand subsoil around 0.10m thick. This subsoil was not present at the south end of the area and was only found in patches towards the centre. This was then overlain by a mid grey-brown sandy clay topsoil ranging in thickness from 0.25m to 0.40m. Full context descriptions can be found in the appendix.

Area AAS2 was positioned to further investigate the features discovered in trenches 11, 12 and 15 in 2009 (Fig 3). Trenches 12 and 15 had both contained linear features dating to the 1st-2nd centuries AD, with early/middle Saxon pottery also being found in the uppermost fill of the ditch in trench 15.

Across the stripped area of AAS2 were six linear features all aligned north-west to south-east, spaced evenly apart and running the full width of the area (Fig 3). Two of these were excavated and recorded, and were interpreted as furrows.

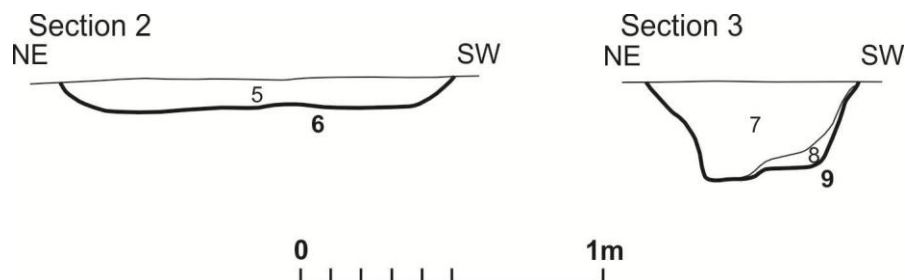
Furrow [4] was 1.30m wide by 0.10m deep, with a wide shallow profile and a flat base. Its fill (12), was brown-grey sandy silt containing no finds.

Furrow [6] was identical to furrow [4] in both size and shape (Fig 4, section 2), with its fill (5) also being a brown-grey sandy silt. Again no finds were present. This feature is comparable to the feature interpreted as a ditch [1207] found during the 2009 evaluation in trench 12 (Jones 2009). This feature followed the same alignment as Furrow [6] and was 1.20m wide by 0.32m deep. However, following the recent work, an interpretation as a furrow is now more likely.

Ditch [9] was found in the south-west corner of the area and, although it followed the same alignment of the furrows its size and form varied (Fig 6). It was 0.70m wide by 0.32m deep with near vertical sides and flat base (Fig 4, section 3). No datable evidence recovered from the fill.

Feature [11] was a very shallow hollow/pit measuring 1.90m by 1.54m, and 0.14m deep. Its fill (10) was brown-grey sandy silt containing occasional charcoal flecks and a possible flint blade. It was located to the north of furrow/ditch [004].

In the 2009 evaluation trenches 11 and 15 also contained ditches. However, these could be not located, possibly due to the area having been stripped down to the natural deposits prior to the commencement of observation and having been disturbed by heavy vehicle tracking across the site (Fig 5).



Sections of [6] and [9] Fig 4



Disturbed ground prior to stripping, looking north-west Fig 5



Ditch [009], looking south-east Fig 6

6.2 Excavation for subsoil

The general stratigraphy of this area was made up of light white-yellow and mid blue-grey natural clay deposits, overlain by a mid orange-brown silty clay subsoil around 0.10m to 0.20m thick. This was then overlain by a dark grey-brown silty clay topsoil approximately 0.25m thick. Full context descriptions can be found in the appendix.

The area was located in the field directly north of Oundle Road (Fig 2). This field was covered by the 2009 evaluation (Jones 2009) so the County Archaeological Advisor agreed that an archaeological presence was not required for the full duration of the stripping. The initial excavations uncovered nothing of archaeological significance which confirmed the results of the geophysical survey of the area carried out in 2007 (GSB 2007) and the evaluation in 2009 (Jones 2009). No trenches had been excavated in this corner of the field but the closest trench, trench 23, located approximately 50m to the south-west had also been blank.



Stripped area, looking north-east Fig 7

7 FLINT by Yvonne Wolfram-Murray

A flint blade was recovered as a residual find from pit/hollow [11]. The raw material was light grey-brown vitreous flint with a smooth light brown cortex. The flint is probably derived from local gravel deposits. The condition of the blade was medium and there was post-depositional edge damage in the form of frequent nicks and some crushing. The patination of the blade ranged from mottling to white patches. The blade was 45mm long and 21mm wide. The worked flint is not dateable.

8 CONCLUSION

The results of the strip, map and record investigations confirmed the results of previous works at the site. Area AAS2, which expanded on the 2009 evaluation (Jones 2009), identified a number of linear features. However, only one of these, [6], equated with a feature from the earlier evaluation. The majority of the features were identified as furrows. Ditch [9] was the only linear feature whose form suggested it was a ditch rather than a furrow, but unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered and so it is uncertain if is contemporary with previously excavated Roman features.

The initial stages of the subsoil extraction north of Oundle Road also confirmed the results from both the previous geophysical survey (GSB 2007) and evaluation (Jones 2009), with the area containing nothing of archaeological significance.

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MOLA
January 2016

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Area AAS2

Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts /Samples
1	Topsoil	Firm mid grey-brown sandy clay with frequent limestone fragments and occasional cobble stones.	0.25-0.40m thick	-
2	Subsoil	Firm light brown clay sand with small angular stones.	0.10m thick	-
3	Natural	Firm light mottled orange-grey sands and clay with occasional limestone outcrop.	-	-
4	Furrow	Linear aligned NW-SE with shallow wide profile and flat base. (Filled by (12))	1.30m wide 0.10m deep	
5	Fill of [6]	Firm grey-brown sandy clay with occasional stone fragments.		-
6	Furrow	Linear aligned NW-SE with shallow wide profile with sloping sides and a flat base.	1.30m wide 0.10m deep	
7	Fill of [9]	Firm dark brown-grey sandy clay with occasional stone.		-
8	Fill of [9]	Loose grey sandy silt and stone fragments (70%).		-
9	Ditch	Linear aligned NW-SE with sharp top edge, near vertical sides and a flat base.	0.70m wide 0.32m deep	
10	Fill of [11]	Firm mid brown-grey sandy silt with occasional charcoal and small angular stones.		SF.1 (Flint)
11	Hollow/pit	Oval aligned E-W with shallow wide profile and a flat base.	1.9m x 1.54m 0.14m deep	
12	Fill of [4]	Firm mid brown-grey sandy silt with small stone fragments.		-

Area for subsoil

Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1	Topsoil	Firm dark grey-brown silty clay with occasional chalk flecks.	c.0.25m thick	-
2	Subsoil	Firm mid orange-brown silty clay with occasional chalk flecks and fragments ($\leq 40\text{mm}$).	c.0.10 – 0.20m thick	-
3	Natural	Firm, light white-yellow with blue-grey mottling (5%), clay with frequent chalk flecks (10%), moderate chalk fragments ($\leq 50\text{mm}$ 5%) and occasional sub-round flint ($\leq 50\text{mm}$ 1%)		-
4	Natural	Firm, mid blue-grey with orange-brown mottling (5%), clay with frequent chalk flecks (10%), and occasional sub-round flint ($\leq 50\text{mm}$ 1%)		-



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