



**Trial trench evaluation and Strip, Map and Record
on land at Kings Cliffe Primary School
Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire
January 2016**

Report No. 16/21

Author: Chris Jones

Illustrator: James Ladocha



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molarnort1 - 241599
Project name	Trial trench evaluation, and Strip, Map and Record on land at Kings Cliffe Primary School, Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Lendlease on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation, and a Strip, Map and Record element, on land at Kings Cliffe Primary School, Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire, prior to the proposed development of the site. Eight trenches were excavated. One medieval ditch and three shallow undated ditches were identified.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Trial trench evaluation; Strip, Map and Record	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	Desk-Based Assessment (Crothers 2015)	
Current Land use	Former school playing field	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	No	
Monument type/ period	Medieval ; ditch. Undated; ditches	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	Medieval pottery	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Kings Cliffe Primary School, Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	c.2 ha	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	TL 0063 9756	
Height OD	64.5m above Ordnance Datum	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton	
Project brief originator	Archaeological Advisor Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton	
Director/Supervisor	Chris Jones	
Project Manager	Mo Muldowney	
Sponsor or funding body	Lendlease Ltd for Northamptonshire County Council	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date/End date	06/01/2016 - 14/01/2016; 01/02/16 – 02/02/16	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	MOLA Northampton: ENN108204 ENN108231	Pottery and animal bone
Paper	MOLA Northampton: ENN108204 ENN108231	Site file
Digital	MOLA Northampton: ENN108204 ENN108231	Mapinfo plans, Word report
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)		
Title	Trial trench evaluation, and Strip, Map and Record on land at Kings Cliffe Primary School, Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire January 2016	
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Trial trench evaluation and Strip, Map and Record on land at Kings Cliffe Primary School Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire January 2016

Abstract

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by Lendlease on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation and a Strip, Map and Record element on land at Kings Cliffe Primary School, Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire, prior to the proposed development of the site. Eight trenches were excavated. One medieval ditch and three shallow undated ditches were identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA was commissioned by Lendlease on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council, to carry out an archaeological evaluation and Strip, Map and Record on land at Kings Cliff Primary School, Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire, in advance of the proposed development of a primary school (Fig 1, NGR TL 0063 9756).

The Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council has advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to determine the nature and extent of any archaeological remains within the site (Mather 2015a and b). This was followed immediately by Strip, Map and Record.

The evaluation and Strip, Map and Record were requested in order to further inform decisions regarding the potential impact of the proposed development upon the archaeological resource in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; DCLG 2012).

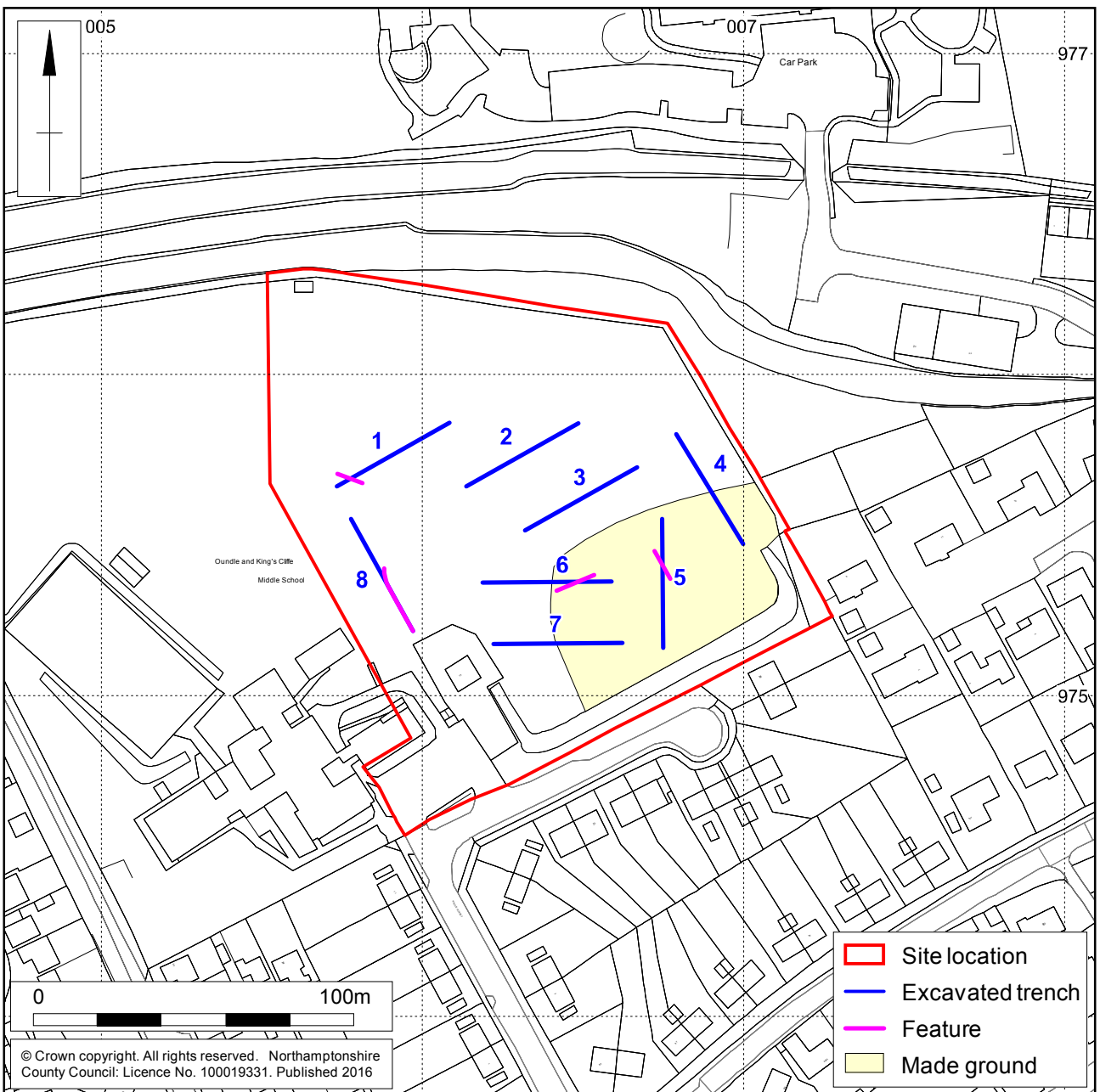
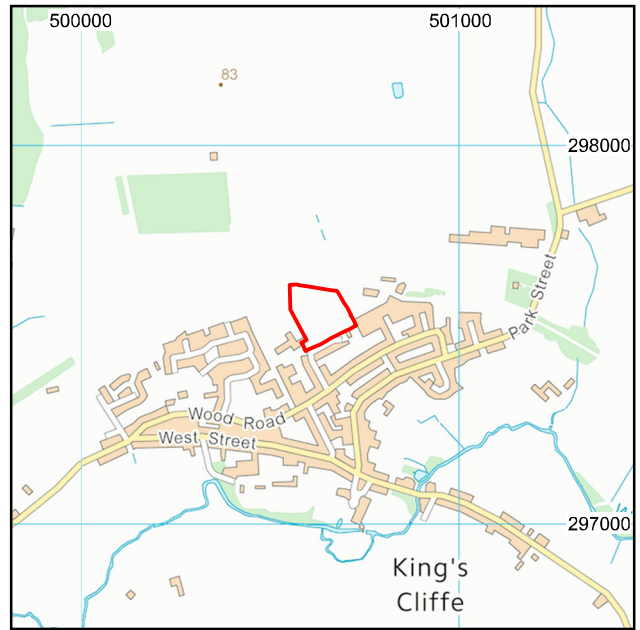
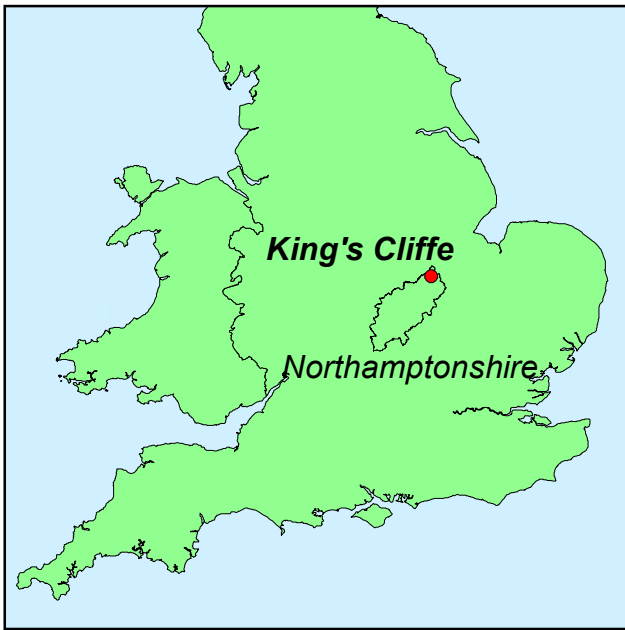
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Trial trench evaluation

The principal objective of the archaeological evaluation was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of an archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The trial trench evaluation was designed to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of important archaeological remains within the application area. Specifically this was through the listed aims, which are as follows:

- establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.



Scale 1:2000

Excavated trenches with archaeological features Fig 1

2.2 Strip, Map and Record

The strip, map and record was designed specifically to further investigate the medieval ditch found in trench eight, and where appropriate, had the same aims as the evaluation, see above.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Topography and geology

The site is located at the crest of a hill on the north side of the village of King's Cliffe (Fig 1). It currently occupies the eastern half of the former King's Cliffe Middle School site and includes an area of levelled playing field and a former staff house. The site is bounded to the north by a disused railway, woodland and a community sports area and to the west by the western half of King's Cliffe former middle school site including the majority of the school buildings. Beyond the former school site, Willow Lane and a recent housing development lie to the west, the eastern and southern boundaries are also formed of housing. The site lies at c64.5m aOD.

Superficial geological deposits consist of typical calcareous pelosols. The solid geology is Blisworth limestone formation (www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex).

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

A full consideration of the site's historical background and archaeological potential is presented in the archaeological desk-based heritage assessment produced by MOLA (Crothers 2015). This identified that no archaeological excavations, events or findspots are recorded within the area of proposed development. The site has remained undeveloped until the Middle School was constructed and the grounds reconfigured to as a sports field. The archaeological potential of the site was considered to be low for all periods, except Roman, which is thought to be moderate. This is due to the presence of a Roman road (Margary route 571), the presumed course of which is located less than 250m north of the site.

No other intrusive archaeological work is known to have taken place, but some geotechnical test pits have been excavated (Listers 2015). These identified made-ground deposits across the site, ranging from 1.2m to 3.5m in depth, overlying a buried topsoil deposit.

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

4.1 Trial trench evaluation

Eight trial trenches, each 40m long by 2m wide, were excavated within the proposed development area. Their locations were predominantly within the footprint of the new school, including areas of playground, although others were located to test areas of less risk of impact through development, such as the sports pitch (Fig 1).

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were fully recorded, following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All deposits were given a separate context number in a sequence assigned to each trench. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

The locations of all trenches were plotted on the ground using Leica Viva GPS survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$, and tied into the Ordnance Survey.

The evaluation conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (2014a). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with Historic England, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (EH 2015). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by MOLA (Mola 2014).

Topsoil, subsoil and modern overburden were removed under archaeological supervision by mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The surface of significant archaeological remains was exposed or, where these are absent, the natural substrate. In practice, the significant depth of the archaeological horizon required the safe stepping of trenches, particularly towards the south and east parts of the site. The trenches were cleaned by hand sufficiently to enhance the definition of features and deposits. The topsoil was stacked separately from the subsoil and other deposits to aid reinstatement, and was stored at least 1m from the edge of the excavation.

All trenches were backfilled with their up-cast material and compacted by the mechanical excavator.

4.2 Strip, Map and Record

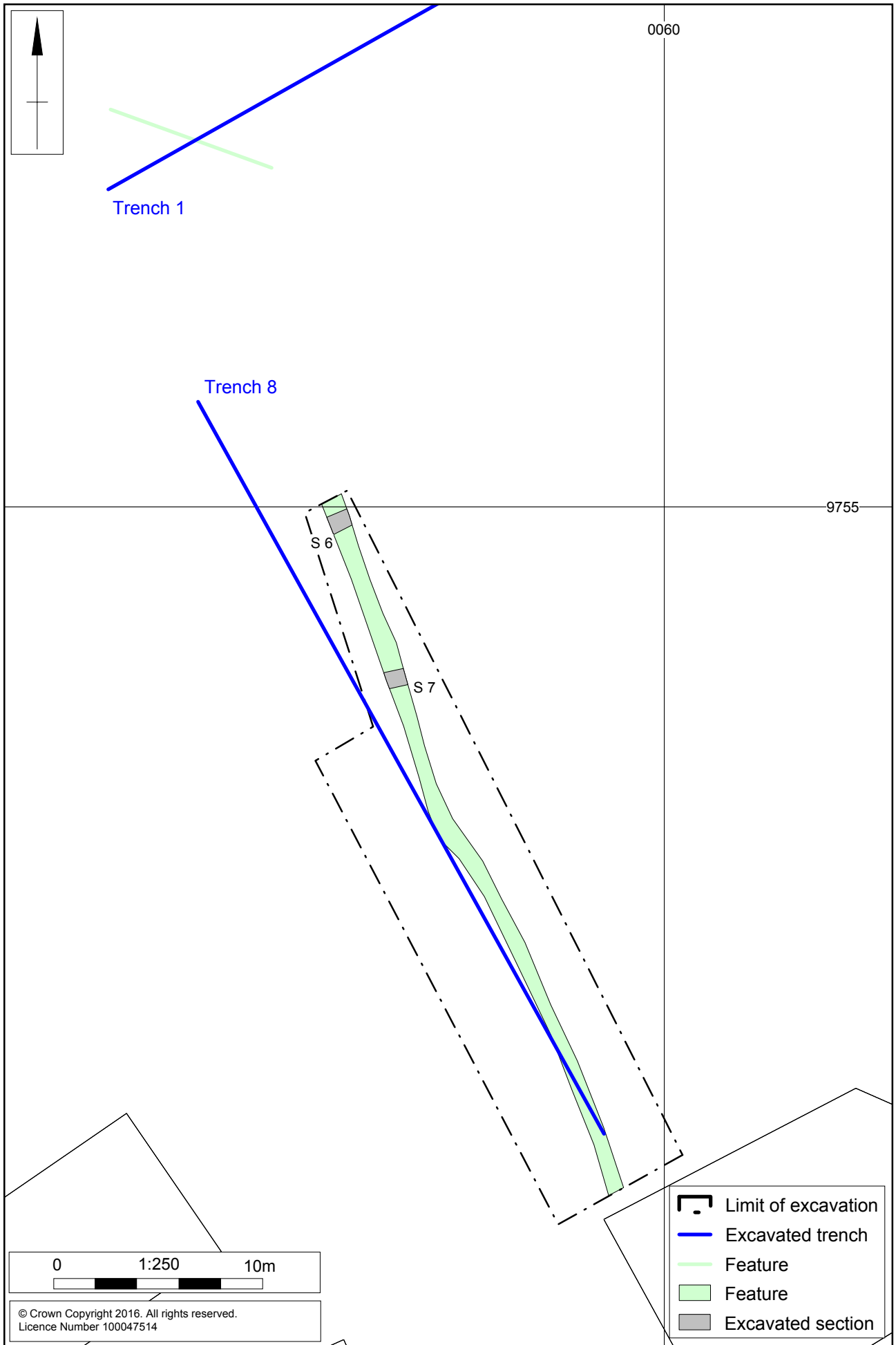
An L-shaped area measuring 233sq m was opened around the ditch identified in Trench 8 (Fig 2).

The Strip, Map and Record was carried out following the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (ClfA 2014b). All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were fully recorded, following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All deposits were given a separate context number in a sequence. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

The location of the area was plotted on the ground using Leica Viva GPS survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$, and tied into the Ordnance Survey.

Topsoil, subsoil and modern overburden were removed under archaeological supervision by mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The surface of significant archaeological remains was exposed or, where these are absent, the natural substrate. The area was cleaned by hand sufficiently to enhance the definition of features and deposits. The topsoil was stacked separately from the subsoil and other deposits to aid reinstatement, and was stored at least 1m from the edge of the excavation.

Both evaluation and Strip, Map and Record were carried out according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014c).



Scale 1: 250

Strip, map and record area Fig 2

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 Trial trench evaluation

The general stratigraphy

On the northern side of the site, the stratigraphy remained broadly similar in all of the excavated trenches. The natural substrate in this area comprised light yellow sandy clay with fragments of brash limestone throughout, between 0.40m and 0.50m below the present ground surface. Trench 1 had a tarmac layer (1001) between the topsoil and subsoil at the south-west end of the trench. The layer was only 0.07m thick and possibly formed the surface of a car park or path (Figs 1 & 3).



Trench 1, tarmac layer (1001), looking north Fig 3

On the south-east side of the site the stratigraphy was overlain by a substantial layer of made-ground. It sealed the topsoil and subsoil between 0.67m and 2.10m below the present ground level. Trench 4 had made-ground (4002) at the south-east end (Figs 1 & 4). Trench 5 had made-ground (5001) along the whole trench while trenches 6 and 7 had made-ground (6001, 7001) at the east end.



Trench 4, showing the made-ground, south-east end, looking south-west Fig 4

The archaeological features

In the west half of the site, a linear ditch [8005], aligned north-west by south-east, was present in Trench 8 (Figs 1, 5, 9 and 10). It appeared to turn towards the east in the middle of the trench. The ditch was 0.74m wide and 0.19m deep, and had a steep sided U-shaped profile with eroded upper edges and a flat base (Fig 10, Section 3). The two excavated sections (3 and 5) showed a consistent pattern of silting. The lower fill (8004), comprised friable light yellow-brown sandy clay with frequent small fragments of limestone throughout. The upper fill (8803) comprised the gradual accumulation of naturally derived material, characterised by compact dark brown-grey silt clay with small sub-angular fragments of limestone. Medieval pottery and animal bone were recovered from the upper fill (8003).



Trench 8, ditch [8005], looking north Fig 5

In Trench 1, a shallow linear ditch [1005], aligned north-west by south-east, was 0.34m wide and 0.20m deep, with a steep U-shaped profile (Figs 1, 6, 9 and 10). The fill (1004) was of mid-brown silt clay and small limestone fragments (Fig 10, Section 4). No finds were recovered from the excavated section.



Trench 1, ditch [1005], looking north-west Fig 6

In Trench 5 a linear ditch [5005], aligned north-west by south-east, was 0.35m wide and 0.15m deep, with a U-shaped profile with gently curving sides to a flat base (Figs 1, 7, 9 and 10). The fill (5004) was of mid- brown sandy clay and small limestone fragments (Fig 10, Section 1). No finds were recovered.

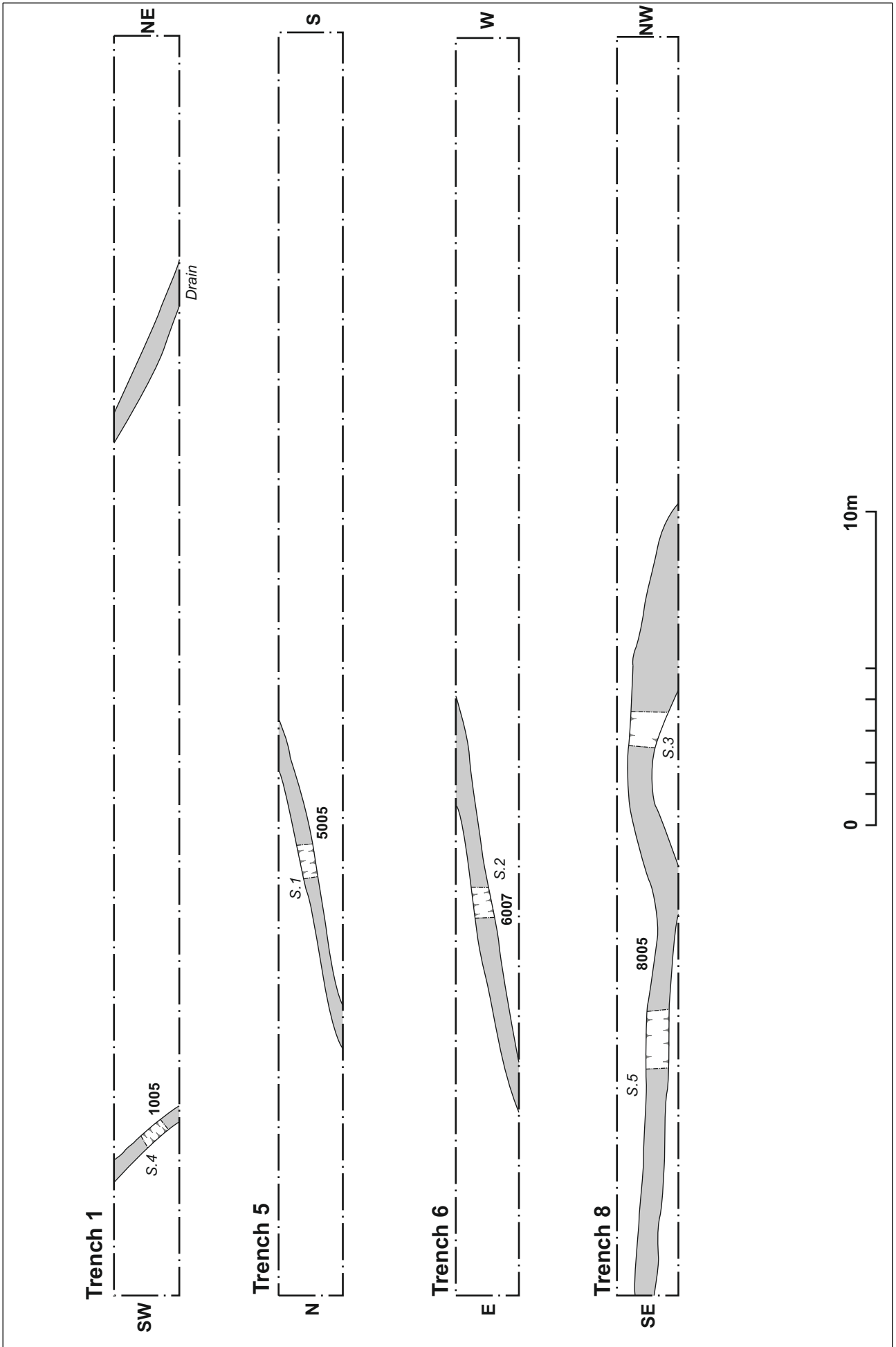


Trench 5, ditch [5005], looking north-east Fig 7

In Trench 6, a linear ditch [6007], aligned east-west, was 0.49m wide and 0.23m deep with a U-shaped profile and flat base (Figs 1, 8, 9 and 10). The fill (6006) was of light brown sandy clay (Fig 10, section 2). No finds were recovered.

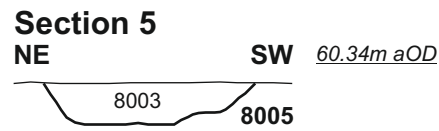
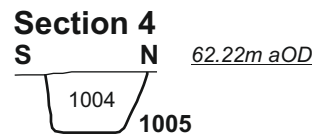
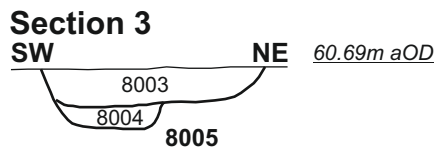
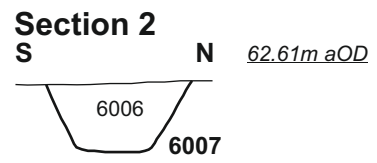
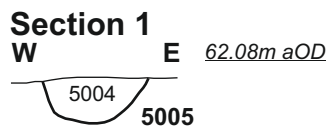


Trench 6, ditch [6007], looking north-west Fig 8



Scale 1:150

Trench plans 1, 5, 6 and 8 Fig 9



Scale 1:25

Sections of excavated features Fig 10

5.2 Strip, Map and Record

The natural substrate in this area comprised light yellow sandy clay with fragments of brash limestone throughout, between 0.40m and 0.50m below the present ground surface. The ditch excavated in Trench 8 continued to the north of the development area where two more sections were excavated [8806, 8808] (Fig 2).

At this point, ditch [8008] was 0.70m wide and 0.25m deep, and had a steep-sided U-shaped profile with eroded upper edges to a flat base. The fill (8009) comprised the gradual accumulation of naturally derived material, characterised by compact dark brown-grey silt clay with small sub-angular fragments of limestone (Fig 11). One small fragment of possibly medieval pottery was recovered.

The ditch was of similar profile and character as seen in Trench 8 and continued in a meandering way north out of the Strip, Map and Record area.



Ditch [8008], looking north Fig 11

6 MEDIEVAL POTTERY by Tora Hylton

Two sherds of Lyveden/Stanion 'B' ware (CTS 320, Blinkhorn 1996) weighing 67g were recovered from the fill (8003) of ditch [8805] in Trench 8. The fabric is grey with buff/orange surfaces and the fragments include an undiagnostic bodysherd with a dull olive green glaze and part of a stabbed rod handle, presumably originating from a jug. Lyveden/Stanion 'B' ware dates to c.AD1225-?1400.

7 ANIMAL BONE by Adam Reid

Seven animal bone fragments were recovered by hand collection from the fill of ditch [8005]. The small assemblage comprised two rib fragments from a large mammal, two large mammal long bone fragments, a sheep/goat mandible, a sheep/goat metatarsal and a horse metatarsal.

The tooth wear of the sheep/goat mandible indicates a mature adult individual, whereas the sheep/goat metatarsal is unfused at the distal end. Although the sample size is very small, this may indicate that more than one animal husbandry practice was utilised at the site. The horse bone displays no evidence of butchery and no evidence of pathological conditions, such as spavin or osteoarthritis, which may indicate that the individual was used as a draught animal.

Although the assemblage adds little to the overall interpretation of the site other than to suggest that domestic animals were utilised, the presence of moderately well preserved bone from an archaeological feature suggests the potential for further faunal analysis, should any future work take place in the area.

8 DISCUSSION

The trial trench evaluation within the development area has determined that the survival of the archaeological horizon is generally good across the site. It was preserved, along with the subsoil and topsoil, under a significant deposit of modern overburden or made-ground.

Despite this excellent survival it was clear that the historic use of the landscape was limited; the identified remains consisted of four ditches only. In addition only one of these contained any dateable material, comprising two fragments of 13th to 14th century Lyveden/Stanion 'B' ware. Animal bone was also recovered, indicating the dietary habits of the nearby settlement, as well as suggesting that horses were used as draught animals. Although not discernible through the evaluation, it is possible that the ditches were interlinked, and possibly formed part of the wider medieval field system on the north side of Kings Cliffe, perhaps field boundaries or drainage ditches.

The Strip, Map and Record that followed the trenching showed the medieval ditch identified in Trench 8 continued both to the north and south, beyond the limits of the stripped area. It remains unclear as to whether the ditch intersects with, or terminates before, the ditch in Trench 1 to the north. No further dating evidence was recovered during this phase of work.

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MOLA Northampton

05 February 2016

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
1	40m x 2m, SW-NE		64.5m	0.50m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1000	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay loam	0.16m - 0.28m deep	-
1001	Layer	Modern tarmac layer	0.07 deep	-
1002	Subsoil	brown sandy clay, with small stone inclusions	0.08m – 0.16m deep	-
1003	Natural		-	-
1004	Fill of [105]	Mid-brown silty clay, with limestone fragments	0.34m wide 0.20m deep	-
1005	Ditch	Shallow U-shaped cut with flat base	0.34m wide 0.20m deep	-



Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
2	40m x 2m, SW-NE		64.5m	0.49m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
2000	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay loam	0.15m - 0.26m deep	-
2001	Subsoil	brown sandy clay, with small stone inclusions	0.16m deep	-
2002	Natural	Brash limestone mixed with light clay	0.06m – 0.18m deep	-



Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
3	40m x 2m, SW-NE		64.5m	0.40m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
3000	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay loam	0.24m - 0.27m deep	-
3001	Subsoil	brown sandy clay, with small stone inclusions	0.12m deep	-
3002	Natural	Brash limestone mixed with light clay	0.06m deep	-



Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
4	40m x 2m, SE-NW		64.5m	0.40m-1.40m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
4000	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay loam, modern	0.18m - 0.30m deep	-
4001	Subsoil	Brown sandy clay, with small stone inclusions, modern	0.15m – 0.20m deep	-
4002	Layer	Made ground with modern brick, limestone, clay	0.34m deep	-
4003	Topsoil	Dark brown clay loam	0.20m deep	-
4004	Subsoil	Light brown sandy clay	0.30m deep	-
4005	Natural	Brash limestone mixed with light clay		-



Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
5	40m x 2m, N-S		64.5m	1.24m-2.30m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
5000	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay loam, modern	0.30m deep	-
5001	Layer	Made ground with modern brick, limestone, clay	0.54m – 1.80m deep	-
5002	Topsoil	Dark brown black clay loam, original	0.25m deep	-
5003	Natural	Brash limestone mixed with light clay	0.25m deep	-
5004	Fill of 405	Mid brown sandy clay	0.35m wide 0.15m deep	-
5005	Ditch	U-shaped with flat base	0.35m wide 0.15m deep	-



Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
6	40m x 2m, W-E		64.5m	0.56m-1.29m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
6000	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay loam, modern	0.22 – 0.32m deep	-
6001	Layer	Made ground with modern brick, limestone, clay	0.29m – 0.42m deep	-
6002	Topsoil	Dark brown clay loam	0.18m – 0.36m deep	-
6003	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	0.10m – 0.22m deep	-
6004 6005	Natural	Brash limestone mixed with light sand silt clay	0.20m deep	-
6006	Fill of 6007	Light brown sandy clay	0.49m wide 0.23m deep	-
6007	Ditch	U-shaped flat base	0.49m wide 0.23m deep	



Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
7	40m x 2m, W-E		64.5m	1.07m-1.95m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
7000	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay loam, modern	0.22 – 0.32m deep	-
7001	Layer	Made ground with modern brick, limestone, clay	0.85m – 1.10m deep	-
7002	Topsoil	Dark brown clay loam	0.16m – 0.30m deep	-
7003	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	0.10m – 0.60m deep	-
7004	Natural	Brash limestone mixed with light sand silt clay	0.18m deep	-



Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth of natural
8	40m x 2m, NW-SE		64.5m	0.42m-0.62m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
8000	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay loam	0.24 deep	-
8001	Subsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	0.08m – 0.24m deep	-
8002	Natural	Brash limestone mixed with light sand silt clay	0.14m	-
8003	Fill of 8005	Dark grey brown silt clay	0.74m wide 0.12m deep	Pottery and animal bone
8004	Fill of 8005	Light grey sandy silt clay	0.35m wide 0.07m deep	-
8005	Ditch	U-shaped ditch with flattish base	0.74m wide 0.19m deep	-





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