



**Archaeological observation, investigation
recording and analysis of land at
Bentley's Farm Bungalow, Helmdon Road,
Sulgrave, Northamptonshire
May 2016**

Report No 16/87

Author: Gemma Hewitt

Illustrator: Ollie Dindol



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Project Manager: Jim Brown
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NGR: SP55831 45209

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. molanort1-252129	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis of land at Bentley's Farm Bungalow, Helmdon Road, Sulgrave, Northamptonshire, May 2016		
Short description	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was carried out by MOLA Northampton, during construction work on land at Bentley's Farm Bungalow, Helmdon Road, Sulgrave, Northamptonshire. Remnant medieval ridge and furrow was observed on the site together with features associated with the former farmyard and buildings.		
Project type	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication		
Site Status	none		
Previous work	none		
Current land use	disused farmyard		
Future work	none		
Monument type and period	medieval and post-medieval		
Significant finds	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Helmdon Road , Sulgrave		
Post code	N/A		
OS co-ordinates	NGR SP 55831 45209		
Area (sq. m/ha)	1.8ha		
Height aOD	c.150m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Liz Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	Jim Brown, MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Gemma Hewitt, MOLA Northampton		
Project Manager	Jim Brown, MOLA Northampton		
Sponsor or funding body	MJD Homes		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	17/05/2016		
End date	18/05/2016		
ARCHIVES	Location	Contents	
Physical	MOLA Northampton store		
Paper		Site records	
Digital		Survey data, report, photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)		
Title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis of land at Bentley's Farm Bungalow, Helmdon Road, Sulgrave, Northamptonshire May 2016		
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Archaeological observation, investigation recording and analysis of land at Bentley's Farm Bungalow, Helmdon Road Sulgrave, Northamptonshire May 2016

Abstract

Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis was carried out by MOLA Northampton, during construction work on land at Bentley's Farm Bungalow, Helmdon Road, Sulgrave, Northamptonshire. Remnant medieval ridge and furrow was observed on the site together with features associated with the former farmyard and buildings.

1 INTRODUCTION

MJD Homes commissioned MOLA Northampton to carry out archaeological observation, investigation, recording during groundworks for the construction of two new houses and car ports on land at Bentley Farm, Helmdon Road, Sulgrave, Northamptonshire (Fig 1; NGR SP 55831 45209).

MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) registered organisation. This report has been prepared in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (CIfA 2014a), the *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014b) and the Historic England (HE) procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (HE 2015a).

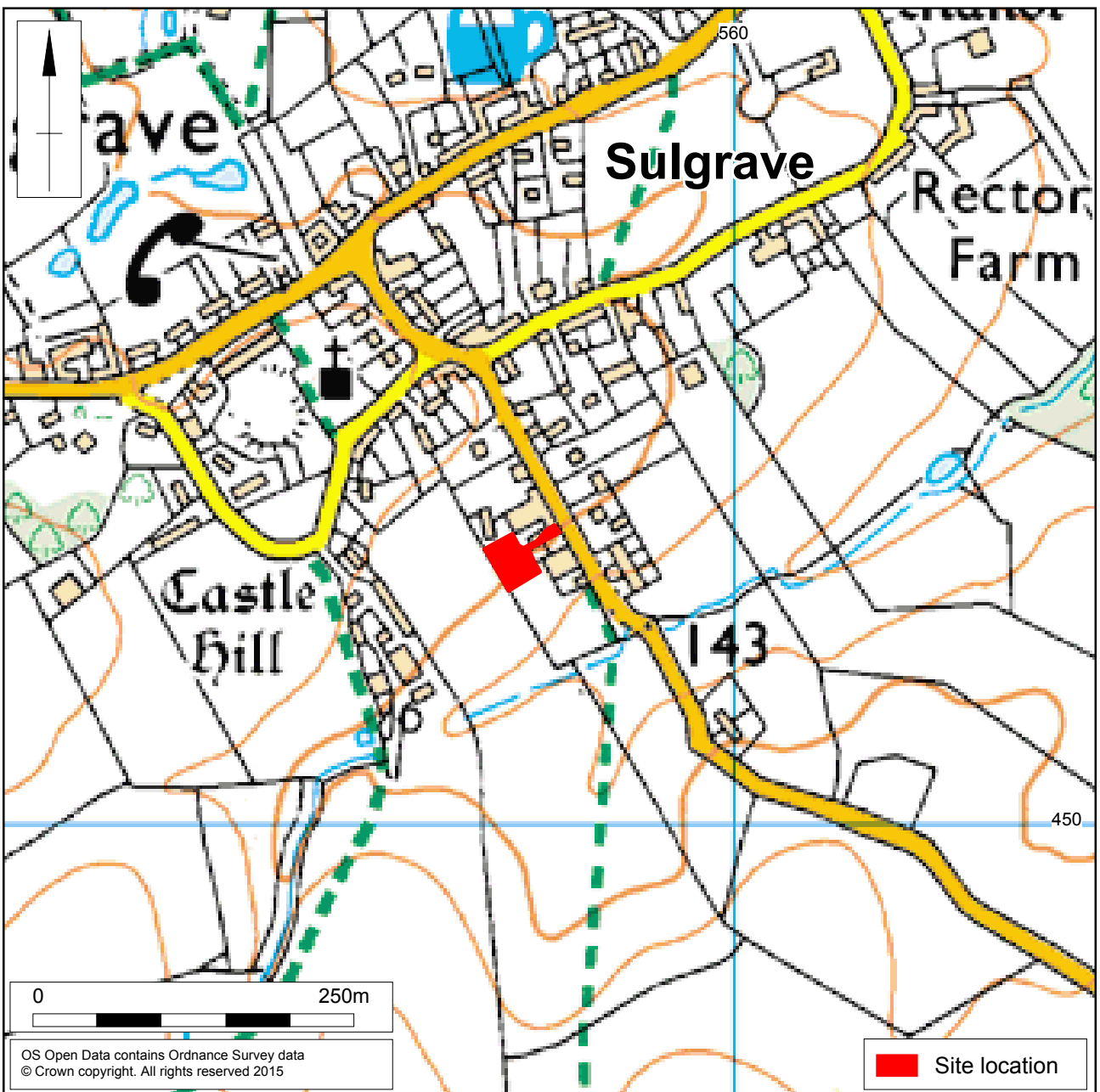
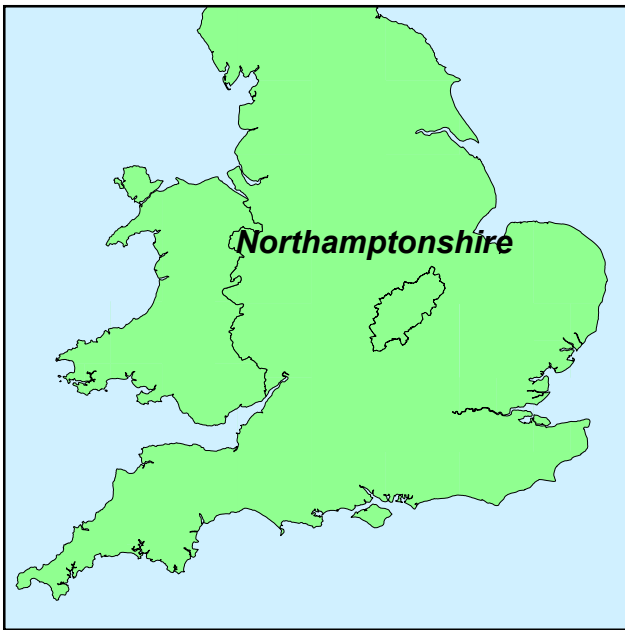
2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

Sulgrave is a village and civil parish in south-west Northamptonshire and is surrounded by arable farmland. The village nestles at the top of a tributary valley of the River Tove, the ground continuing to rise to the west, the valley falling away to the east. The proposed development area lies to the south, immediately outside the historic core of the village, and only 200m south-east of the castle ringwork (Fig 1).

The site itself was previously a farmyard and is dominated by a large agricultural barn trees and hardstanding. The development area is bounded to the north and south by adjoining properties along the west side of Helmdon Road. The existing buildings fronting the road will be retained, with the access road to properties at the rear. The west side (rear) of the development opens out onto pasture fields with ridge and furrow earthworks visible on aerial photographs.

The land proposed for the new development is a rectangular parcel of land on level ground at c.150m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as Taynton Limestone Formation (BGS 2015). Superficial deposits are not recorded. The site lies on slowly permeable waterlogged clayey and loamy soils of Denchworth association (LAT 1983).



Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The following information is summarised from the WSI (MOLA 2016):

A few worked flints are recorded between Sulgrave and Moreton Pinkney at SP574474 (RCHME 1982, 138). This is likely to have been part of a widely distributed flint scatter in the extreme north of the parish, along the valley spring lines, dating from the Neolithic and early Bronze Age.

A scatter of abraded Roman pottery sherds were found during archaeological excavation of the medieval castle ring work (Davison 1977, 109). Roman settlement at SP 579450 between Sulgrave and Helmdon has produced a scatter of Roman pottery sherds (NAS 1978, 182). Pottery has also been recovered in the north of the parish.

The principal focus of the historic core of Sulgrave village is around the ringwork known as Castle Hill and the parish church (RCHME 1982, 139). The earthworks now consist of a roughly circular bank, though there are indications that this is actually made up of five approximately straight sides. The bank survives up to 3.6m high, with a flat top, and there are traces of a surrounding ditch. A causeway across the ditch on the north-west side leads through the bank and provides the only entrance.

The manor of Sulgrave was held by Ghilo in 1086 and three under-tenants, Hugh, Landric and Otbert, held it of him (Ryland *et al.* 1902, 345) and were recorded within the Domesday Book. The site was excavated between 1960 and 1976; no further work has taken place since.

On the north-west of the village are the remains of low banks and shallow ditches, which are presumed to be the former gardens of the houses that would have lined the street. Earthworks to the south side of the street are remains of sunken platforms and low scarps with banks bounded on the south by a continuous scarp up to 1m high.

The open fields of Sulgrave were enclosed by an Act of Parliament in 1767, but no map is known to survive. Ridge and furrow exists extensively on the ground or can be traced on air photographs over much of the parish.

3 OBJECTIVES

The main objective was to mitigate the impact of the development through preservation by record and to:

- 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 landscape;
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of the ceramic type series within the region;
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions, where present.

Specific research objectives were considered from national and regional research frameworks had they been relevant to the results of the work (EH 1997; Cooper 2006, Knight *et al.* 2012).

4 METHODOLOGY

Archaeological mitigation comprised the continuous observation of removal of topsoil, subsoil and overburden with a smooth edged ditching bucket under archaeological direction, followed by the investigation and recording of any archaeological features or deposits revealed.

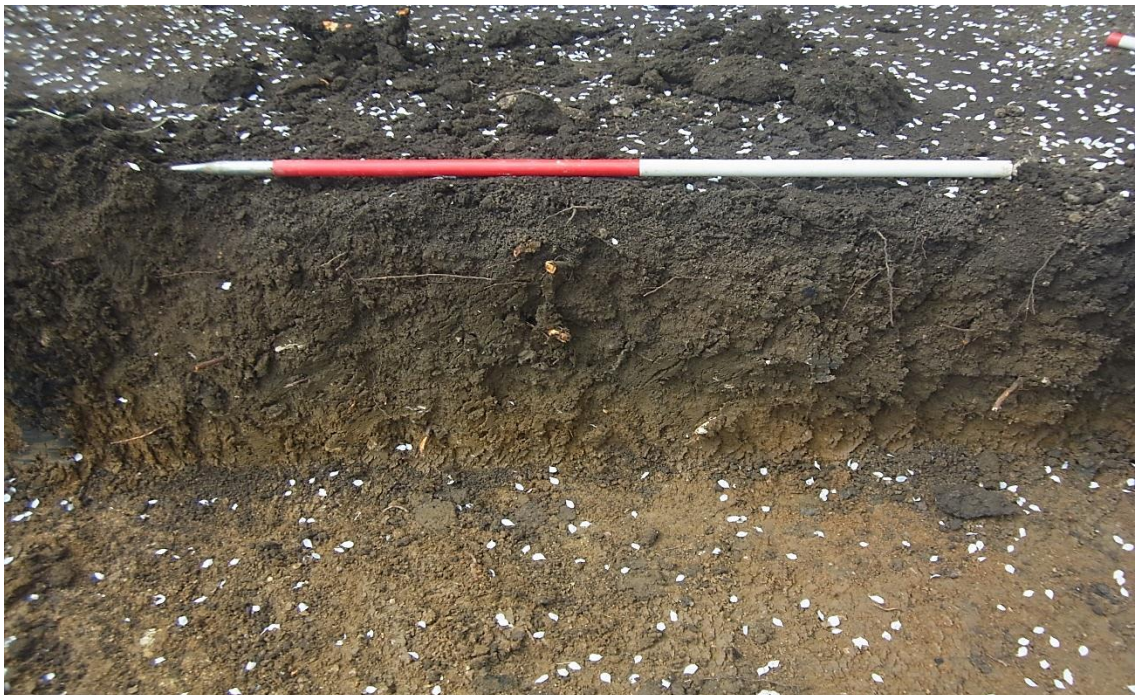
Features were cleaned and investigated sufficiently to characterise and record their size, depth, date and composition. Recording followed the MOLA fieldwork manual (MOLA 2014). All features were described on *pro-forma* watching brief sheets, planned to scale on permatrace and a full photographic record was maintained.

All groundwork and associated spoil heaps were scanned with a metal-detector. No unauthorised metal detecting was permitted anywhere within the development area.

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

Three areas were excavated within the study area (Fig 2). All areas were taken down to the natural substrate which occurred at 0.35m in Area 1, 0.60m in Area 2 and 1.40m in area 3. The natural consisted of orange -brown clay, with 1% small flecks of chalk. Overlying this was a light to medium grey- brown silty-clay subsoil with 10% rooting and 5% small stones, the subsoil was 0.20m deep in all areas. The topsoil consisted of a 0.15m layer of mid-dark grey- brown silty clay with 10% rooting and small stones (Fig 3) and was only present within Area 1.

Area 2 and 3 had a layer of make-up material (10) sealing the subsoil; this was between c.0.40m deep and c.0.60m in Area 2 and c.1.20m deep in Area 3. The layer was dark grey- brown silty clay which included fragments of brick, slate roof tile and post-medieval blue transfer print pottery, none were collected (Fig 4).



Stratification within Area 1, looking north-west Fig 3



Stratification within Area 2, made up ground, looking east Fig 4

5.1 Area 1

The area was a wide L-shape 13m by 11m at the widest point. Towards the south-west corner of the area was a modern rectangular pit [5], which was cut through the subsoil and contained very dark blue-black silty sand with 20% large charcoal chunks, and a geological test pit.



Modern pit [5], looking south-west Fig 5

5.2 Area 2

Area 2 was 14.50 long and 12m wide at its widest point. Three furrows were present within this area, aligned north-west to south-east. Furrow [7] was 2m wide and 0.16m deep with gentle sloping sides and a broad flat base (Fig 6). It was filled with light to med brown-grey silty clay and contained 1% small stones. The furrows were 5.5m apart, and can only be seen in Area 2.



Furrow [7], looking south Fig 6

The furrow was cut by a later land-drain that was aligned north-east to south-west across Area 2 and was being fed from the circular soakaway in north-east of the area. The soakaway was circular in plan, c.1.0m in diameter and was constructed from unfrosted red brick and surrounded on the surface by the concrete that was present when the barn was in use. Furrow [7] was cut by a later small pond [9] irregular in plan with uneven sides and base and was filled with a light to med grey-blue-green silty sandy clay with 30% rooting, very cassy in colour and smell.



General view of Area 2 featuring furrows, drain and pond, looking south-west

Fig 7

5.3 Area 3

The carport area was rectangular, 8m long by 7.5m wide. Natural was seen in the western side of the area at the depth of 1.2m, which dropped to 1.40m to the south-east. No features were present within this area.



Area 3 general view, looking south Fig 8

6 CONCLUSION

The presence of the furrows indicates that the site was located outside the medieval village, within the surrounding open fields, and strongly suggesting that that the village did not extend this far to the south-east of its core. The other recorded features are of more recent dated, associated with the farmyard and outbuildings. No other features of archaeological interest were uncovered within the three open areas.

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MOLA Northampton

29 June 2016

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Length, width & alignment				
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts
1	topsoil	mid-dark grey- brown silty clay with 10% rooting and small stones	D:0.15m	-
2	subsoil	light –medium grey- brown silty-clay subsoil with 10% rooting and 5% small stones	D:0.20m	-
3	natural	orange- brown clay, with 1% small flecks of chalk	-	-
4	fill of 5	very dark blue- black silty sand with 20% large chunks of charcoal	unknown	-
5	pit	rectangular, unexcavated	unknown	
6	fill of 7	light –med brown- grey silty clay and contained 1% small stones	W:2.00m D:0.16m	-
7	furrow	gently sloping sides and a broad flat base	W:2.00m D:0.16m	
8	fill of pond	light-med grey- blue- green silty sandy clay with 30% rooting	W:c1.50m L:c 3.00m D:0.10m	-
9	pond	irregular in plan and had uneven sides and base	W:c1.50m L:c 3.00m D:0.10m	
10	make up	dark grey- brown silty clay which included fragments of brick, slate roof tile and post-med blue transfer print	D: between 0.40m and 1.20m	



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