

**Archaeological observation investigation
and recording on land at
34-36 High Street, Braunston
Northamptonshire
June 2015**

Report No. 15/124

Author: Paul Clements

Illustrator: James Ladocha



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Project Manager: Anthony Maull
Site Code: ENN107907
NGR: SP 54130 66254

MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN 01604 700 493
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk

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MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 700 493
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk

STAFF

Project Manager: Anthony Maull Cert Arch

Fieldwork: Tim Sharman BA

Text: Paul Clements BA

Saxon Pottery: Paul Blinkhorn BTech

Animal Bone: Adam Reid BSc MSc

Illustrations: James Ladocha BA

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS molanort1- 253144	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation, and recording on land at 34-36 High Street Braunston, Northamptonshire, June 2015		
Short description	In June 2015 an archaeological observation, investigation, and recording was undertaken by MOLA Northampton during the groundworks for the construction of a new dwelling at 34-36 High Street, Braunston, Northamptonshire, as requested by the Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Archaeological Advisor. A small early-middle Saxon ditch and two modern features were observed during the works.		
Project type	Archaeological observation, investigation, and recording		
Previous work			
Current land use	Garden plot		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Early-middle Saxon ditch		
Significant finds	Early-middle Saxon pottery		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	34-36 High Street, Braunston		
Easting Northing	SP 54130 66254		
Area (sq m/ha)	0.10 ha		
Height aOD	c 125m AOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting		
Director/Supervisor	Tim Sharman (MOLA Northampton)		
Project Managers	Anthony Maul (MOLA Northampton)		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	08/06/2015		
End date	09/06/2015		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	ENN107907	Pottery	
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
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Northamptonshire
March 2015**

Abstract

In June 2015 an archaeological observation, investigation, and recording was undertaken by MOLA Northampton during the groundworks for the construction of a new dwelling at 34-36 High Street, Braunston, Northamptonshire, as requested by the Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Archaeological Advisor. A small early-middle Saxon ditch and two modern features were observed during the works.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Ms J Rolt to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording during groundworks for the construction of a detached dwelling and access road between 34-36 High Street, Braunston, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 54310 66254, Fig 1). The work fulfils condition 8 of planning consent (DA/2014/0408) following a request for archaeological investigation by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor at Northamptonshire County Council.

The scope of works was outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (MOLA 2015) following guidelines in the procedural document MoRPHE issued by Historic England (HE 2015) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a and 2014b).

2 BACKGROUND

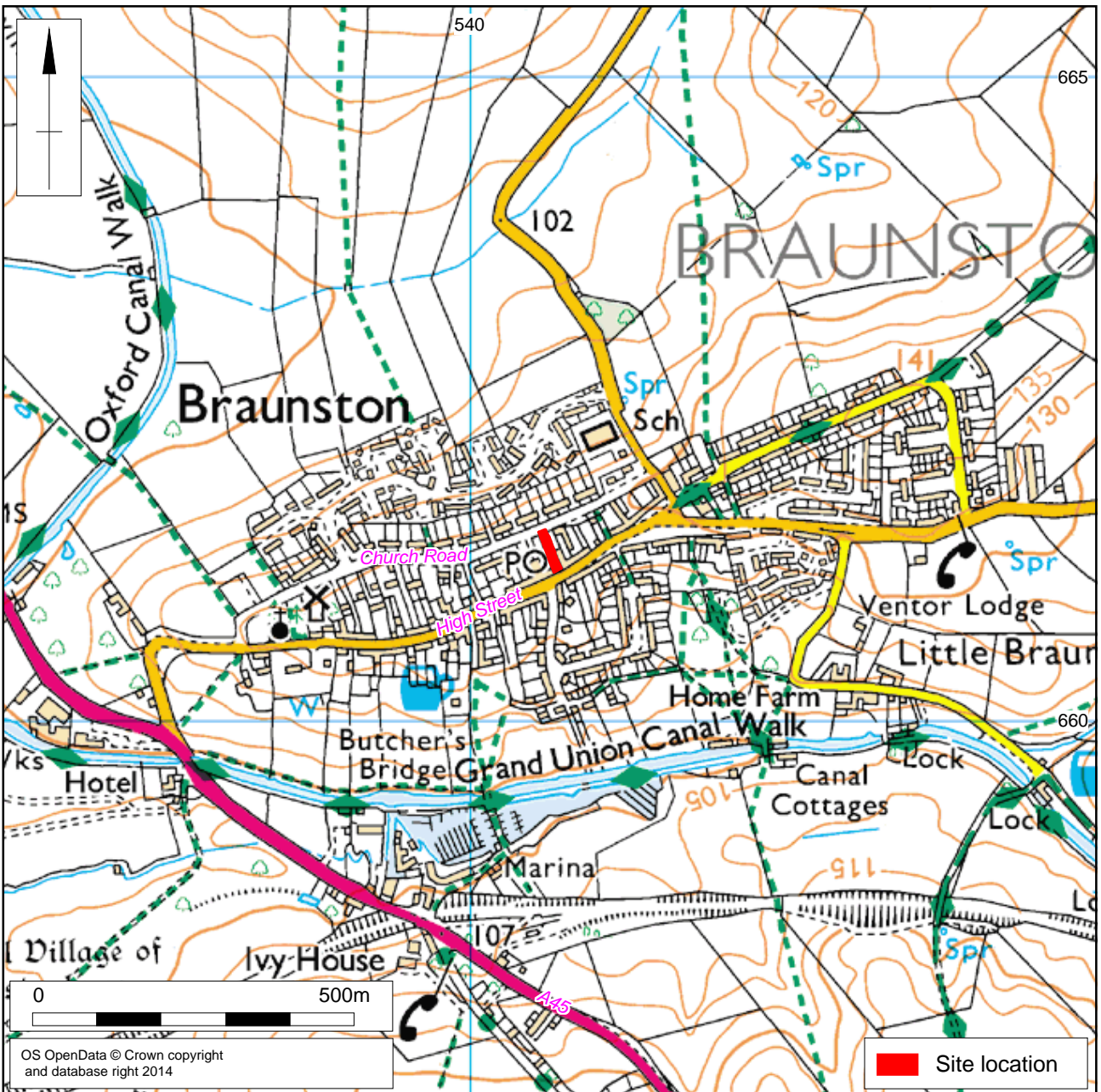
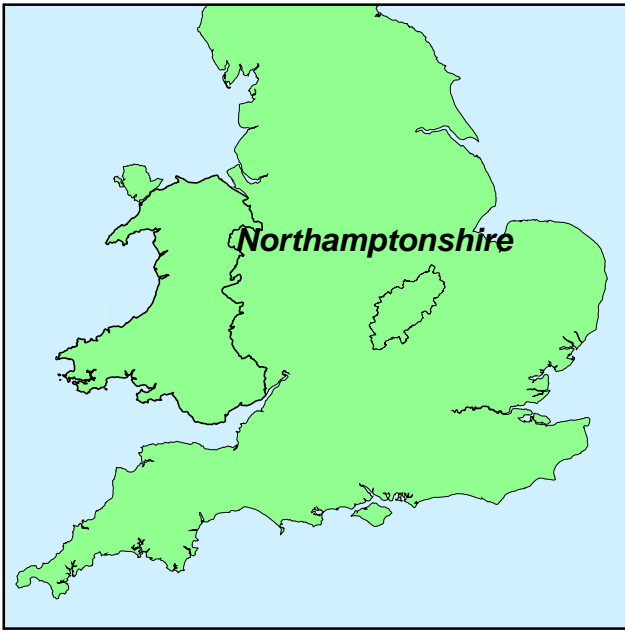
2.1 Location and topography

The site is bounded by neighbouring properties to the north-east and south-west. Church Street and High Street form the northern and southern boundaries of the development site respectively.

The area of development lies on sloping ground, rising from c123m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the rear of the property on Church Street, to c126m aOD where the land faces onto High Street.

The village of Braunston is situated within Northamptonshire, close to the border with Warwickshire. It is sited on a ridge between two streams, and the junction between the Oxford Canal and the Grand Union Canal.

The underlying geology of the site is recorded as Charmouth Mudstone Formation overlain by superficial deposits of glaciofluvial sand and gravel (BGS 2015). The soils are classified as slightly acid, loamy, and clayey soils (Landis 2015).



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

2.2 Historical background

As part of the Written Scheme of Investigation a historical search was undertaken. The findings have been summarised here.

Prehistoric activity is limited and no known sites are located within the vicinity of the development area.

Roman

Evidence of Roman activity is limited to unstratified finds. In a garden, 150m north of the development, a Roman coin was found (HER 7239/0/0; Fig 2). Further Roman finds have been found south of the village.

Medieval

The deserted medieval village (DMV) of Braunstonbury (HER 394), 700m south-west, survives as significant earthworks, comprising platforms, holloways, crofts, and ditched enclosures. Holloways have also been identified heading from Braunstonbury towards the modern village on the south-west side (HER 396/0/2; Fig 2). The village had disappeared by the early 18th century (RCHM 1981, 23). Around Braunston ridge and furrow cultivation is evident as extant earthworks.

Two further DMVs, Braunston Cleves or Fawcliff, and Wolfhampcote are located c1.6km to the north of the site and c1.0km to the south-west, respectively.

All Saints Church in Braunston was probably constructed around the 13th century and was rebuilt in the 14th century.(HER 18/82; Fig 2). The majority of this structure was demolished and replaced in the 19th century.

Post-medieval

The surrounding area of Braunston has a rich industrial history, mainly related to the junction of the Grand Union and Oxford canals. The Daventry and Marton Junction Railway passes Braunston on the southern side of the village (HER 5657). A 19th-century brick kiln is situated c300m to the south (396/6/1; Fig 2).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits, exposed during the groundworks for the new development and any associated groundworks;
- determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions;
- create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.



Scale 1: 10,000

Selected Historic Environment Record (HER) monuments Fig 2

3.2 Methodology

All groundworks were undertaken by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to remove topsoil and subsoil within the footprint of the new dwelling (Fig 3). The area was cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features.

Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets which include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. Recording followed standard MOLA Northampton procedures as described in the Fieldwork Manual (MOLA 2014). All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (ClfA 2014b). Photography was with 35mm black and white film, and digital images.

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

4.1 General site stratigraphy

The underlying geology was encountered at a depth of 1.10m below the modern ground surface. This comprised of light orange-brown sand with occasional small limestone inclusions. This was overlain by dark yellow-brown sandy loam subsoil, 0.60m thick. A sherd of early-middle Saxon pottery was recovered the subsoil. The topsoil was dark grey-brown sandy loam, 0.50m thick, and contained modern debris including brick, tile and glass. Two modern pits [108] and [110] were identified in the south-eastern corner of the development (Fig 3).

4.2 The archaeological evidence

Identified in the south-west corner of the development was ditch [106]. Aligned east-west, it was 0.60m wide and 0.30m deep, with a U-shaped profile. Naturally accumulated sand (105) lined the northern edge of the ditch. A second deposit, naturally accumulated yellow-brown sand (104), filled the rest of the ditch. A single sherd of early-middle Saxon pottery was recovered from fill (104) along with pieces of animal bone (Fig 3).

5 THE FINDS

5.1 The pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised two sherds with a total weight of 28g. Both are rimsherds from jars of earl-middle Anglo-Saxon date (c AD450-850). They are in a similar fine, slightly sandy fabric, comprising finely-crushed sandstone up to 1mm, some with ferruginous cement, with many free quartz grains. Both sherds have a 'wet-hand' finish, masking most of the inclusions.

The first, from subsoil (102), weighs 18g and has an upright and slightly everted profile. It had a rim diameter of 250mm, and is 3% complete. The second, from context (104), weighs 10g, and has a more outwardly curved profile, with a light bead on the outer rim-top. The original rim diameter was 220mm, and is 4% complete.

Both sherds are very typical of the early-middle Anglo-Saxon hand-built pottery tradition of the region, and have numerous parallels (e.g Blinkhorn 2007). They are in good condition, and one of the sherds appears reliably stratified, although both are the result of secondary deposition.



Scale 1:250

Area of archaeological observation with ditch [106] Fig 3

5.2 The animal bone by Adam Reid

A total of four animal bone fragments weighing a total of 57g were recovered from context (104) the upper fill of gully [106]. One fragment is sheep or goat mandible with five cheek teeth. The state of tooth wear suggests that the individual was approximately 12 -24 months old. Two of the fragments were long bone fragments of medium mammal size (sheep/goat, pig) and the other was a long bone fragment of large mammal size (cattle or horse). The fragments were moderately well preserved with no visible evidence of butchery or carnivore gnawing. A single fragment of sheep or goat distal humerus was also recovered from subsoil (102).

6 CONCLUSION

The works have identified a short length of a small early-middle Saxon ditch in the south-west corner of the footprint of the new dwelling. It has been truncated by a modern pit limiting its length to c1.60m. The exact use cannot be ascertained from this short section of ditch, but it likely forms part a boundary.

No other evidence of Saxon activity is evident from Braunston. Recovery of an early-middle Saxon sherd from the subsoil, as well as the ditch, may indicate further activity in this area possibly under the modern village.

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MOLA Northampton
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MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 700 493
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk