



**Archaeological evaluation on land at
Harrington Road, Rothwell
Northamptonshire
July 2016**

Report No. 16/125

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Illustrator: Olly Dindol



Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Harrington Road, Rothwell Northamptonshire July 2016

Project Code: ENN108399

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OASIS REPORT FORM

| PROJECT DETAILS | | Oasis No. molanort1-257654 | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Project title | Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Harrington Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire, July 2016 | | |
| Short description | <i>MOLA was commissioned to carry out an evaluation on land off Harrington Road, Rothwell. Two small ditches and one posthole were recorded. One of these ditches contained a single abraded Roman pottery sherd.</i> | | |
| Project type | Trial trench evaluation | | |
| Site Status | None | | |
| Previous work | None | | |
| Current land use | Arable | | |
| Future work | Unknown | | |
| Monument type and period | Ditch and posthole: undated. Ditch/furrow: medieval to post-medieval | | |
| Significant finds | Pottery: late Roman | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | | |
| County | Northamptonshire | | |
| Site address | Harrington Road, Rothwell | | |
| Post code | - | | |
| OS co-ordinates | NGR SP 80795 80559 | | |
| Area (sq m/ha) | 4.86ha | | |
| Height aOD | c.111m aOD | | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | |
| Organisation | MOLA Northampton | | |
| Project brief originator | Lesley-Ann Mather Northamptonshire County Council | | |
| Project Design originator | CgMs Consulting | | |
| Director/Supervisor | Gemma Hewitt | | |
| Project Managers | Mo Muldowney MOLA, Myk Flitcroft CgMs Consulting | | |
| Sponsor or funding body | Morris Homes | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | |
| Start date | 5/7/2016 | | |
| End date | 7/7/2016 | | |
| ARCHIVES | Location | Contents | |
| Physical | MOLA Northampton ENN 128399 | Pottery | |
| Paper | | Site records | |
| Digital | | Survey data, report, photographs | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report) | | |
| Title | Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Harrington Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire, July 2016 | | |
| Serial title & volume | 16/125 | | |
| Author(s) | Gemma Hewitt | | |
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Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Harrington Road, Rothwell Northamptonshire July 2016

Abstract

MOLA was commissioned to carry out an evaluation on land off Harrington Road, Rothwell. Two small ditches and one posthole were recorded. One of these ditches contained a single abraded Roman pottery sherd.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Morris Homes, to carry out archaeological trial trenching at Harrington Road, Rothwell, Northamptonshire (NGR SP80795 80559; Fig 1).

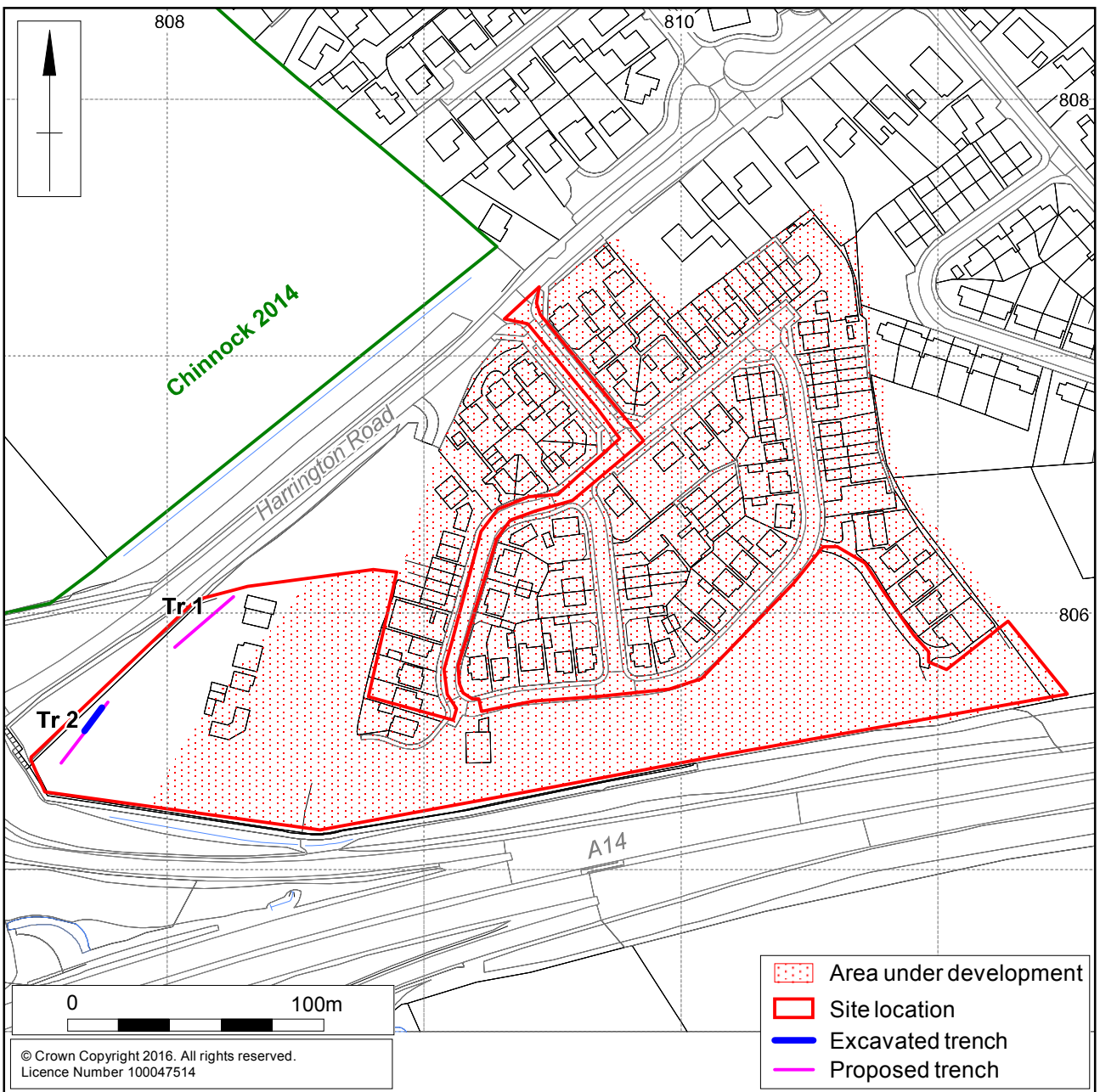
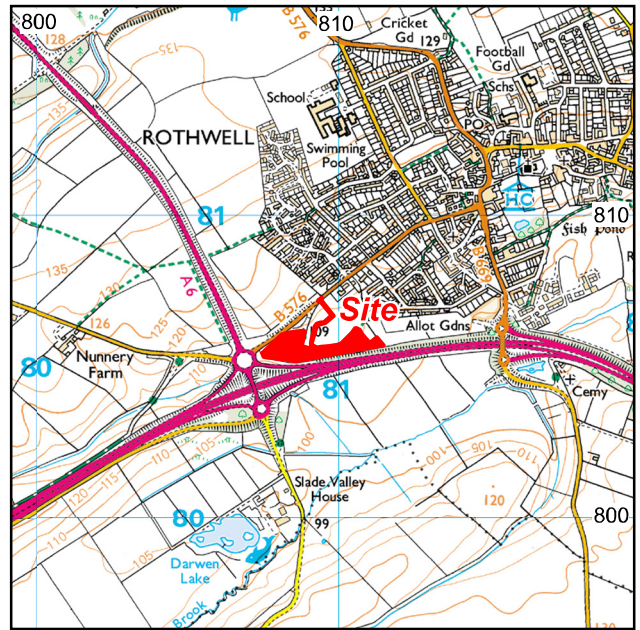
All works were undertaken in accordance with *the National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012), The Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council (NCCAA) has advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to determine the nature and extent of any archaeological remains within the development area. The requirements were outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MOLA (MOLA 2016).

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The development area comprises a 4.86ha parcel of land to the south-west of the town of Rothwell (Fig 1). The site is bounded to the north by Harrington Road and to the south by the A14. To the west lies the junction between these roads and the A6. To the east the site is bounded by properties off Edinburgh Close, Harrington Road and Meadow Road. The eastern part of the site is currently under development.

The site slopes very slightly from east to west, falling from a height of c111m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 107m aOD to the west.

The underlying geology is mapped as mudstone of the Whitby Mudstone formation (BGS 2016). The soils comprise well-drained brashy fine and coarse loamy ferruginous soils over ironstone of the Banbury Association (LAT 1983).



Scale 1:2500

Site location and trench locations Fig 1

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3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. The aims of the investigation were to:

- Establish the date, nature and extent of the 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 past local environmental conditions.
- Produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to inform a decision to be made concerning the site's archaeological potential.

Specific research objectives were drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (Cooper 2006, updated by Knight *et al* 2012) as relevant.

If applicable, reference will be made to the national framework for research, as set out by English Heritage (now Historic England) (EH 1997).

4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The following has been taken from the WSI (MOLA 2016).

Prehistoric activity has previously been identified in the wider landscape around the site. Around 540m to the north-west, possible Neolithic or Bronze Age activity has been recorded. The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in England (RCHME) has recorded further prehistoric and Roman sites in the wider environs of the site and throughout the parish of Rothwell.

A programme of geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation was undertaken in 2014 also in the field to the north of Harrington Road by MOLA Northampton (Chinnock 2014, Fig1). A series of ditches, identified in the geophysical survey as being part of several large enclosures, were dated from the ceramic evidence from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD. An undated trackway and quarrying was also recorded with the area.

Post-Roman remains include an Anglo-Saxon cemetery, north-west of the evaluation area, and extant earthworks south of the town associated with shrinkage of the settlement in the medieval period (RCHME 1979).

A large concentration of medieval pottery was identified in a field to the west of the site across the A6. This was thought to be representative of a hitherto unidentified settlement site (Shaw and Sharman 1992) but lack of subsurface archaeological evidence indicates that the distribution of pottery probably instead reflects multiple episodes of manuring of the site. Extant ridge and furrow earthworks are recorded c400m to the south-west, c700m to the north-west and 650m to the south-east of the site.

The development area falls partially within the area of observation made during works on the A14 Road Corridor in 1989-94, to the south of the development area. (Soden and Dix 1994). The report records that an undated hollow was found in Upper Lias Clay on the southern edge of the site (at SP 8110 8055).

A geophysical survey was undertaken to the east of the current development in an earlier phase of works (Butler 2009). The survey identified a possible, truncated, ditched enclosure, a former north-south watercourse, two possible modern pipes, and

possible walls. A possible post-medieval field boundary has also been recorded. An archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken by ULAS in 2000 in advance of proposed development. It identified few known archaeological remains to the south (Meek 2000).

The field immediately to the north across Harrington Road has previously been the subject of several studies as part of the archaeological assessment undertaken prior to the construction of the A6 Rothwell to Desborough Bypass (Shaw and Sharman 1992). Cropmarks have been identified through aerial photography as features associated as Iron Age in date. Subsequent geophysical survey (Mudd and Hindmarch 2001) and trial trenching (Mudd 2001) was undertaken. A trial trench excavated across the anomalies confirmed the absence of archaeological remains and confirmed that they were geological in origin (Mudd 2001).

5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A programme of evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by MOLA (2016) in response to a request by Lesley-Ann Mather the Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council (NCCAA). This required the excavation of two trenches (Fig 1).

Trench 1 was inaccessible due to embankment works that made the area unsafe to work in. Only 11m of Trench 2 was opened due a to lack of safe working space. In order to complete the reduced length, Trench 2 was widened to 4m. Other areas of the development site were unavailable due to being under construction. All the topsoil and subsoil had been removed from the area before our arrival on site and had been repeatedly disturbed by vehicles. Therefore Trench 2 was stripped by mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless bucket approx. 0.10m to reveal a clear natural substrate, into which archaeological remains had been cut.

Trench 2 was surveyed using a differential GPS (Leica Viva) operating to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m. The excavation of the trench 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).

Levels in metres above Ordnance Datum were established for Trench 2 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).

6 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The natural horizon across the majority of the site comprised yellow clay. Archaeological features were recorded within the northern side of the trench and makeup material was identified the south of Trench 2.

Unless otherwise stated all recorded features cut the natural horizon.

6.1 Trench 1

The proposed location for Trench 1 was found, on arrival at the site, to be unavailable for excavation due to existing and ongoing groundworks, including the shoring of the embankment (Fig 2) of the adjacent Harrington Road. The area was both too confined to operate the mechanical excavator safely and too close to the concurrent construction works. As work could not proceed in a safe manner, the trench was not excavated.



Intended location of Trench 1 Fig 2

6.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned south-west to north-east and lay at the south-western side of the development area (Fig 5), as close to its proposed position as possible, given further constraints, such as houses being constructed immediately adjacent.

Two linear features, a posthole and a spread of material were identified within this trench.

Ditch [207] was aligned north to south (Figs 3, 5 and section 2). It was up to 0.80m wide and 0.20m deep with steep sides and a broad flat base. The ditch continued to the south, where it became less deep, and was cut by ditch [209]. No finds were recovered.



Ditch [207] looking north Fig 3

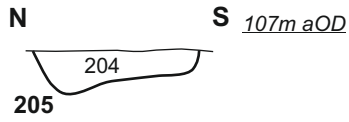
Ditch [209] was aligned north-west to south-east (fig 3, 5 and section 3). It was between 1.4 to 1.8m wide and survived to only 0.1m deep. The single fill was light grey-orange sandy clay (208) from which one fragment of worn 2nd -3rd century Roman pottery was recovered.



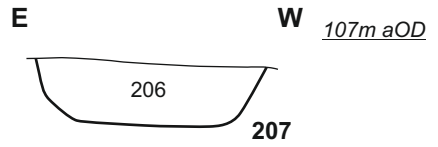
Ditch [209] looking west Fig 4

Posthole [205] (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5, section 1) was located at the far north-western side of the trench. The posthole was 0.50m in diameter by 0.15m deep, with steep sides and a broad base that sloped down to the north. No finds were recovered.

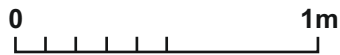
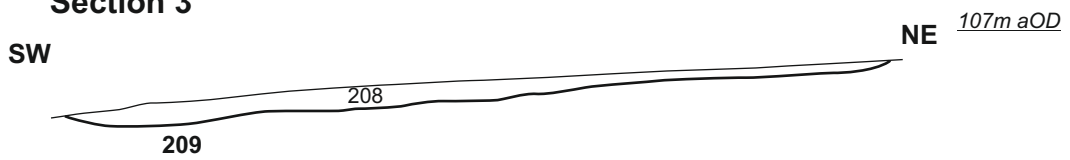
Section 1



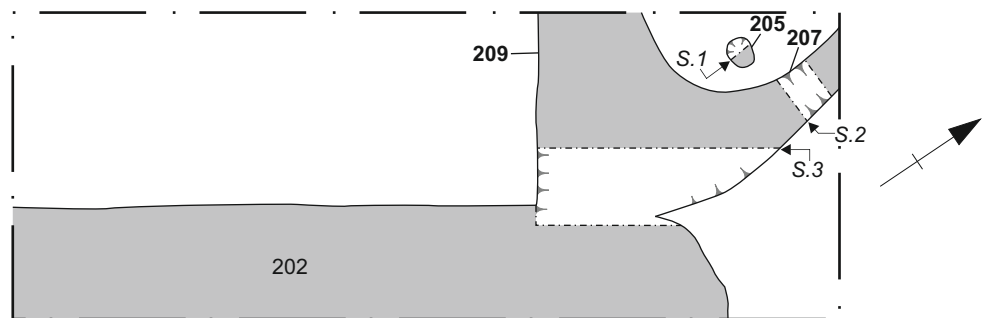
Section 2



Section 3



Trench 2



Scale 1:25 (section), 1:100 (plan)

Sections and plan of features, 205, 207 and 209 Fig 5

Modern disturbance (202) was present in the south-east side of the trench. It extended for almost the full length of the trench (9.5m), with a rounded end to the north-east. It comprised re-deposited yellow-blue clay, and was associated with the ongoing house building. It was clearly modern and therefore not investigated beyond checking the relationship with ditch [209].

7 THE FINDS

7.1 The Roman pottery by Gemma Hewitt

Fill, (108) produced 1 sherd of pottery, weighing 3.2g. It was an un-diagnostic, heavily abraded fragment of grog-tempered ware dating to the 2nd -3rd century. The sherd is 6mm thick and is uniformly orange on the outside and a light brown in the core. The sherd most closely corresponds to the A2 Aston Roman pottery type series.

8 CONCLUSION

Three features were recorded during the trenching and all were heavily truncated and disturbed by recent building workings, leaving no more than 0.2m depth surviving. One sherd of Roman pottery was recovered dating to the 2nd-3rd century but its abraded state indicates it was residual.

The closest known features were located on the northern side of Harrington Road and formed part of a Late Iron Age settlement (Chinnock 2014). There were also furrows at this site, which shared the same north-west to south-east alignment as shallow ditch [209]. Even given the lateral truncation at this site, it is very likely that this feature was also a furrow.

There was no clear relationship between ditch [209] and ditch [207], although the darker fill of ditch [207] was not observed close to the junction with ditch [209], suggesting that [209] was later, or that [207] had terminated before that point. Ditch [207] was therefore likely to be medieval or earlier. No dating was recovered from the posthole.

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MOLA
15 July 2016
Revised: 18 July 2016

APPENDIX: CONTEXT TABLE

| Trench No. | Length, width & alignment | | | Height of natural (aOD) |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 | 11m x 4m N-S | | | 107m |
| <i>Context</i> | <i>Context type</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Dimensions</i> | <i>Artefacts/Samples</i> |
| 201 | Make up | Firm, light brown-grey, clay with 5% brick fragments | D:0.10m | - |
| 202 | Make up | Mixed yellow-grey clay with 30% brick fragments | D:0.40-2.0m | - |
| 203 | Natural | Yellow clay | - | - |
| 204 | Fill of [205] | Firm, orange-brown, silty clay with 5% iron stone fragments | W:0.50m D:0.15 | - |
| 205 | posthole | Circular , steep side, with sloping base | W:0.50m D:0.15m | - |
| 206 | Fill of [207] | Firm, light orange-brown, silty sandy clay with 5% small ironstone fragments | W:0.80m D:0.20m | - |
| 207 | Ditch | Linear, steep sided with flat base | W:0.80m D:0.20m | - |
| 208 | Fill of [209] | Compact, light grey orange ,clay with 5%rooting | W:2.80m D:0.09m | pottery |
| 209 | Ditch | Linear, shallow sloping sides and flat base | W:2.80m D:0.09m | - |



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