



**Trial trench evaluation on land at
Westthorp, Greatworth
Northamptonshire
August 2016**

Report No. 16/168

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Joanne Clawley



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Site code: GWHWTP 16
Accession code: ENN108411

Quality control and sign off:

Issue No.	Date approved:	Checked by:	Verified by:	Approved by:	Reason for Issue:
1	29/09/2016	Mo Muldowney	Mo Muldowney	Liz Muldowney	Draft for client review

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molanort1-280716	
Project name	Trial trench evaluation on land at Westhorp, Greatworth, Northamptonshire August 2016		
Short description	MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Grand Union Housing Group to carry out archaeological trial trenching on a proposed development site on land at Westhorp, Greatworth prior to proposed development. Five ditches and a pit/ditch were identified in the south-east corner of the development area. A small assemblage of pottery and animal bone suggests that the activity was probably medieval and is a relic of the agricultural hinterland of a once much larger settlement.		
Project type	Evaluation		
Site status	None		
Previous work	None		
Current Land use	Agricultural		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type/ period	Ditches, ditch/pit: undated and post-Roman		
Significant finds	Roman and early medieval pottery; animal bone		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address (including postcode)	Land west of Westhorp, Greatworth, Brackley		
Study area (sq.m or ha)	0.32ha		
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	SP 55063 42772		
Height OD	c 165-166		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator	Assistant Archaeological Advisor, NCC		
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	James West		
Project Manager	Mo Muldowney		
Sponsor or funding body	Grand Union Housing Group		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date/End date	16/08/2016 – 17/08/2016		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content	
Physical	ENN108411 MOLA Northampton store	Site documents – context sheets et al	
Paper		Mapinfo plans, Word report, dxf data, digital photographs	
Digital			
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)			
Title	Trial trench evaluation on land at Westhorp, Greatworth, Northamptonshire August 2016		
Serial title & volume	16/168		
Author(s)	James West & Mo Muldowney		
Page numbers	21 pages including text and illustrations		
Date	29/09/16		

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Abstract

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Grand Union Housing Group to carry out archaeological trial trenching on a proposed development site on land at Westhorp, Greatworth prior to proposed development. Five ditches and a pit/ditch were identified in the south-east corner of the development area. A small assemblage of pottery and animal bone suggests that the activity was probably medieval and is a relic of the agricultural hinterland of a once much larger settlement.

1 INTRODUCTION

In August 2016, MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Grand Union Housing to conduct an archaeological evaluation on land at Westhorp, Greatworth, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 55063 42772) (Fig 1).

The Assistant Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) had 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 Brief prepared by Northamptonshire County Council (Mordue 2016a & b) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by MOLA (2016).

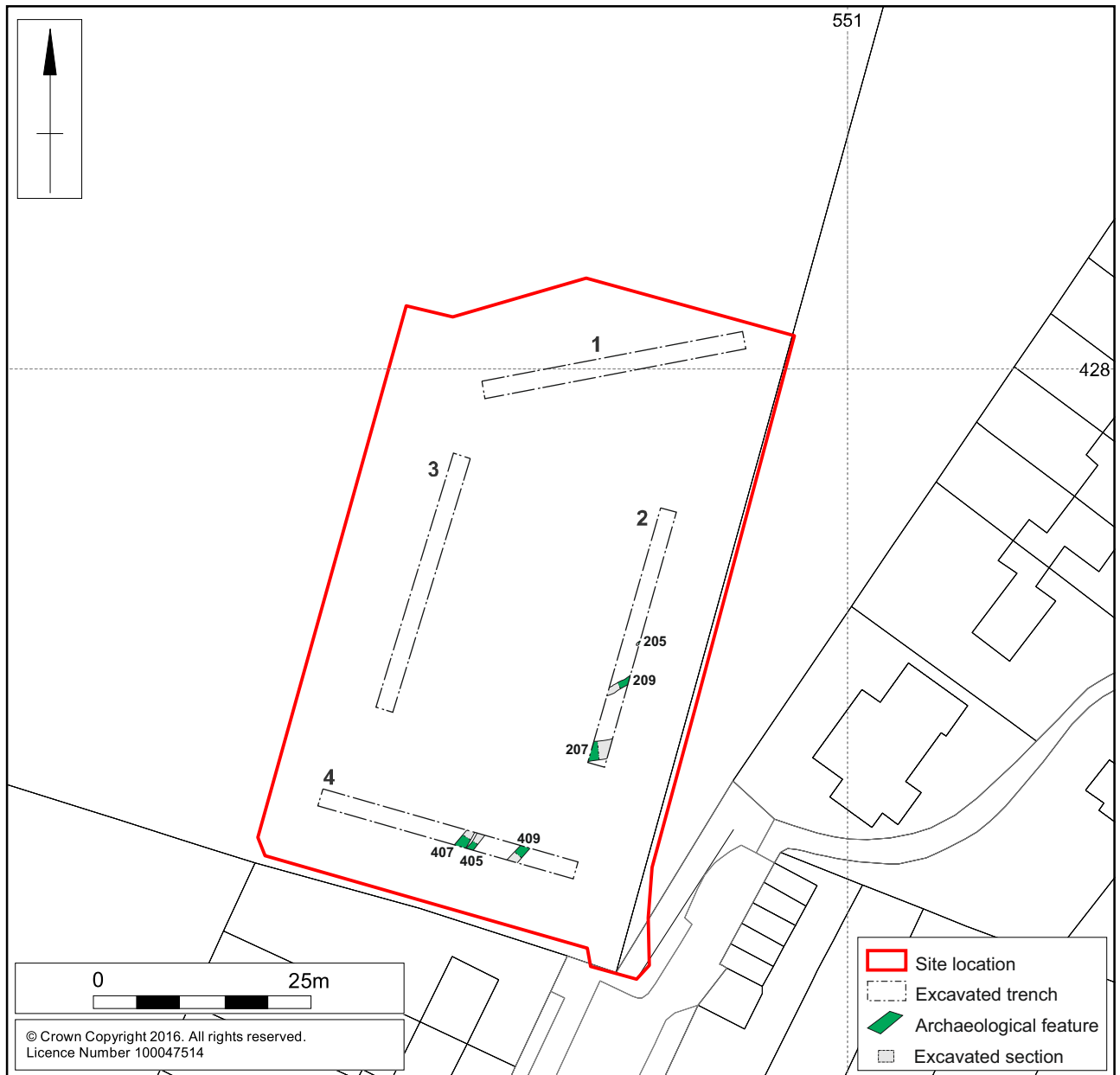
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the work is to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The following information was required to allow the development of a strategy for further investigation of the site by:

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

The evaluation was carried out following the guidelines produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a) and *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014b) and the East Midlands regional framework (Knight *et al* 2012, Cooper 2006).



Scale 1:750

Site location and excavated trenches Fig 1

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

The development area lies in the north-west of the village of Greatworth (Fig 1). The site comprises a roughly rectangular parcel of land, 0.32ha in size, and is bounded by agricultural fields to the west and north, and the residential properties of Westthorp to the east and south. The land has a very gentle slope down to the south, lying at an elevation of approximately 165m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

The underlying geology is mapped primarily as Rutland Formation mudstone, with a small area of Taynton Limestone Formation (l to the south (BGS 20 16). The soils comprise shallow, locally brashy well drained calcareous fine loamy soils of the Aberford association (LAT 1983).

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

A search of the Historic Environment Record for Northamptonshire (HER) indicated that no heritage assets, designated or undesignated, are to be found within the proposed development area. A study area of a 500m radius produced a number of historic and archaeological sites. Within the wider study area there are 19 Listed Buildings. Outside the study area is the scheduled monument of Stutchbury Medieval Village (MNN19692). The site is 2.3km to the north-east of the development area.

Immediately to the north-east of the development site, around 60m from the site, an undated inhumation was identified during building works in the 1980s. The grave was oriented approximately east-west, and was unfurnished (MNN25258, MNN6483).

Prehistoric

Possible prehistoric occupation around 400m south-west of the site (MNN3442) has been suggested by finds of unstratified worked flint (MNN18394). The flint was not diagnostic, and could conceivably date from the early Neolithic to late Bronze Age. Another area of similar possible occupation can be found 680m due west of the site (MNN3440).

Romano-British

A number of possible Romano-British settlements have been identified within a 500m radius of the site, identified by a number of spotfinds, including a bronze figure of an owl (MNN116556) and scatters of pottery (MNN18302, MNN18392). The possible settlement sites are situated 420m south-east (MNN303), 500m south (MNN304) and 130m west (MNN3438). This latter site may demonstrate continuity from the Romano-British period through to the Saxon period.

Saxon

The identification of a Saxon period pottery scatter (MNN116649) may indicate the location of a Romano-British to Saxon era settlement, aerial photography for this area has recorded trackways and enclosures (MNN 3439).

Tree removal works at St Peters churchyard (MNN18309) exposed a burial with associated metalwork and Saxon pottery.

GreatWorth was mentioned in the Domesday Book: 'of the Bishop of Bayeux's fief, William holds two hinds in Greatworth'. This maybe reference to William Peverel as the landholder as he held over lands within the area during this period.

Medieval

The scheduled monument of Stutchbury Medieval Village (MNN 19692) to the north-east of Greatworth, has surviving and buried earthworks; the settlement remains form a 'T' shaped system of principal hollow ways, with the main street aligned north-south running south from Stutchbury Hall. The remains of the earthworks of the banks of the hollow ways can be seen to the east, west and the north of the main drive to the hall. The earthworks comprise houses, gardens, yard, building platforms and ponds.

Greatworth village was first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as a single manor and the village was held by St. Andrews Priory. St Peter's Church (MNN105951, MNN8267) has elements, including the chancel, dating to the 13th century; the tower is thought to date to the 14th century. The church has been modified in the 17th and 19th centuries. The church is a Grade II* listed building (DNN413).

Evidence of Medieval field systems and remains of ridge and furrow (MNN 140092 and MNN 18346) have been recorded to the west of Greatworth, 200m to the south-west of the development area.

Post medieval

There are a number of Grade II listed buildings within the area, originating in the 17th and 18th centuries (MNN105944/DNN430, MNN105945/DNN435, MNN105946/DNN436, MNN105947/DNN437, MNN105961/MNN161907/DNN400, MNN161907/, MNN105960/ DNN390). Most of these houses are clustered together within the conservation area within Greatworth (DNN 12037).

Greatworth Manor (MNN 105962/DNN404) was burnt down in 1793 and was rebuilt in the early 19th century; however elements of the original house remain in the formal gardens (MNN18307) and stable blocks (MNN 18308) which date to the early 18th century.

Modern

The RAF Greatworth Wireless Transmission Station (MNN14564), originating in 1943 and in use until 1988, lies 450m to the north east of the proposed development area. A large number of houses are located within the historic core of Greatworth and are over 160m to the south-east of the development site. Many of these houses have been altered over time (MNN161889, MNN161890 to MNN161898, MNN161903, MNN161908 to MNN61910, MNN161915, MNN161916, MNN161919, MNN161922 to MNN61930, MNN161969, MNN61970, MNN161972, MNN165908, MNN161913/ MNN161914) and have changed in use, for example to a garage (MNN161906).

The agricultural nature of the land surrounding Greatworth is reflected in the presence of a small number of farmhouses and farm buildings (MNN161903-161905) and the Tithe map of 1845 shows the entire area as being enclosed by this date.

Map Regression

The development area is situated to the north of Westhorp and Greatworth. The site has been agricultural land since at least 1883; and was used as allotments between 1898 and 1977. The historic mapping for the area shows that there has not been any structure on the site since the 1880s.

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Four trenches, each 30m long, were excavated using a JCB 3 CX mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m-wide toothless ditching bucket (Figs 1 and 2). The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological direction to reveal the natural substrate.

The location of the trenches was surveyed and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid using Leica Viva GPS survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$. A full photographic record comprising digital images was maintained. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

The excavated area was cleaned sufficiently to define any features. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were fully recorded, following standard MOLA Northampton procedures (MOLA 2014). All deposits were given a separate context number. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

All trenches were backfilled with their up-cast, lightly compacted by the mechanical excavator.

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

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General stratigraphy

The natural substrate was fairly consistent across the site comprising mid yellow-brown clay with infrequent mudstone and occurred between 0.39-0.56m below the present ground surface, except in Trench 1, where the undisturbed geological horizon was light grey clay with frequent degraded mudstone, 0.79m below the present ground surface.

Subsoil was present across the site, and was generally consistent throughout all trenches, where it comprised mid red-brown to grey-brown silty clay with occasional small stones. It was overlain by friable dark brown silt to spoil with occasional small stones, which was between 0.20-0.30m thick, except in Trench 1, where there was a 0.30m to 0.40m thick deposit of mixed light brown-grey silty clay and blue clay between the subsoil and the topsoil.

All trenches contained mudstone or gravel land drains.

5.2 The archaeological remains

At least five ditches and a ditch/pit were identified in the south-east corner of the development area, in trenches 2 and 4 only (Fig. 1). Trenches 1 and 3 contained no archaeological remains. Pottery recovered from two of the ditches, indicates a post-Roman date for the activity.

All features truncated the natural and were overlain by the subsoil, unless otherwise stated. A full list of deposits by trench can be found in the Appendix.

Trench 2

Two ditches and a pit/ditch were identified in Trench 2. All were located in the south half of the trench. Pottery was recovered from ditch [209]; ditch [207] and pit/ditch [205] were undated.

Ditch [209] was aligned north-east to south-west and was 0.79m wide and 0.21m deep (Fig. 2). It had a U-shaped profile and rounded base and was filled with mid brown silty clay with orange-grey mottling (208), from which two small sherds of 11th to 12th century St Neots ware pottery were recovered.



Ditch [209], facing east (scale 0.5m) Fig. 2

Ditch [205] was aligned east-west and had a U-shaped profile and flat base. It was 0.34m wide by 0.10m deep. The fill (204) comprised mixed mid grey-brown silty clay and orange silt.

Ditch [207] was aligned north-east to south-west, and was 1.86m wide and 0.33m deep with a U-shaped profile and flat base. The fill (206) comprised mid grey-brown silty clay, containing rare amounts of charcoal, small angular mudstone, animal bone and a flint nodule.

Trench 4

Three ditches were identified in Trench 4. All were located near the south-east end of the trench and all were aligned north to south. Pottery was recovered from ditch [409]; ditches [405] and [407] were undated.

Ditch [409] was 1m wide by 0.43m deep. It had a U-shaped profile and flat base (Fig. 3). The fill (408) comprised light brown silty clay with orange-grey mottling, and contained infrequent small stones, one sherd of Romano-British pottery, animal bone and charcoal flecks. Analysis of the animal bone showed that a cattle tooth, three horse

teeth, two fragments of cattle scapula and a further 18 fragments of indeterminate mammal bone were recovered.

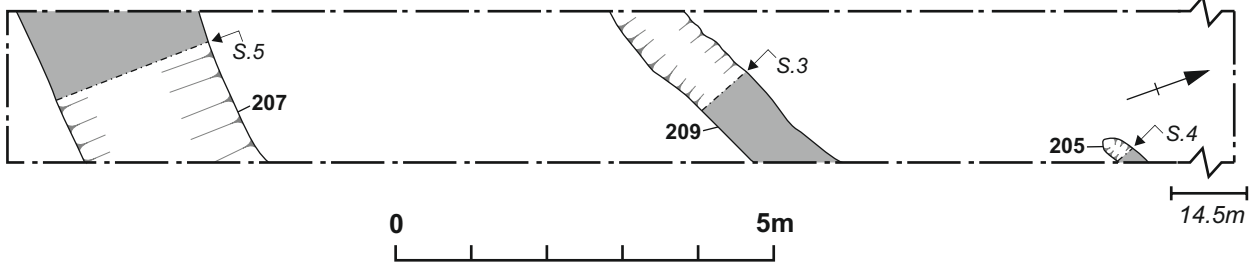


Ditch [409], facing north-east (scale 1m) Fig. 3

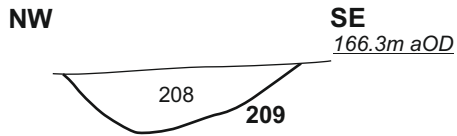
Ditch [405] was 0.80m wide by 0.26m deep and had a U-shaped profile and flat base. The fill (404) was mid-brown silty clay with orange-grey mottling, and contained infrequent small stones and charcoal flecks.

Ditch [407] was 1.09m wide by 0.21m deep with an open, irregular V-shaped profile with a v-shaped base. The fill (406) was mid brown silty clay with orange-grey mottling, and contained frequent small stones and infrequent charcoal flecks.

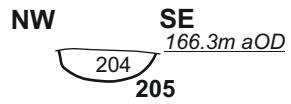
Trench 2



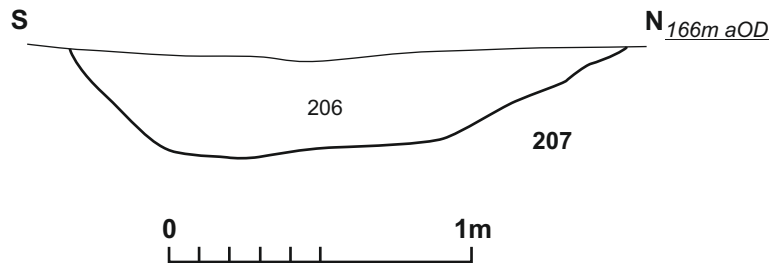
Section 3



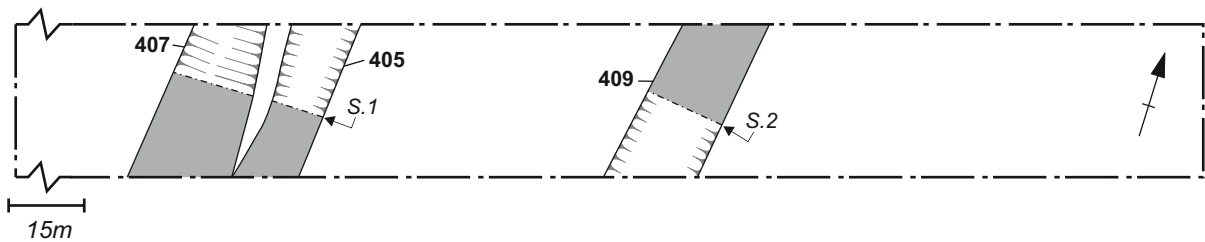
Section 4



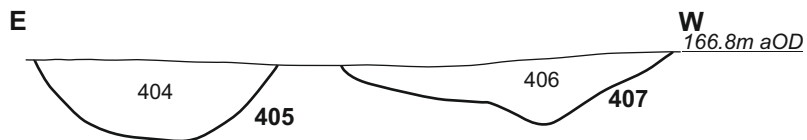
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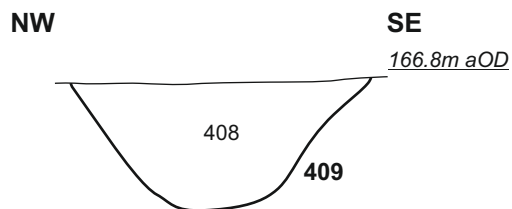
Trench 4



Section 1



Section 2



6 THE FINDS

6.1 The pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised three sherds with a total weight of 4g.

Two of the sherds (weight = 3g) occurred in ditch fill 208, and are both T1(2) type St Neots Ware, fabric F200 of the Northamptonshire County Type-Series, and of 11th – 12th century date. They are somewhat abraded, and most of the calcareous inclusions are leached out. The other sherd occurred in ditch fill 408, and is a very abraded fragment (weight = 1g) of a fine oxidised ware of Romano-British date. Given their size and condition, it is highly likely that they are all residual.

6.2 The animal bone by Adam Reid

A small quantity of animal bone was hand collected from two of the excavated contexts. Context (408), the single fill of ditch [409] contained a cattle tooth, three horse teeth, two fragments of cattle scapula and a further 18 fragments of indeterminate mammal bone. A single fragment of a cattle metapodial was also recovered from context (206), the single fill of ditch [207].

The small assemblage holds very little research value and no inferences of past diet or economy can be made. However, the presence of moderately well preserved bone fragments from excavated features indicates the potential for further faunal analysis, should any further work take place at the site.

6.3 The plant macrofossil remains by Rebecca Gordon

Two samples were taken for the recovery of plant macrofossils and artefacts. Samples were processed by flotation at MOL A Northampton using a siraf tank fitted with a 250 micron mesh and 500 micron flot sieve. The flots and residues were dried and sorted for archaeobotanical remains and artefacts. Residues were sorted by eye using a 10mm, 4mm and 2mm sieve and flots were sorted under a binocular microscope (10x magnification). Plant remains were identified with the aid of Cappers *et al* (2006) and nomenclature in the tables follows S tace (2010). Modern fibrous roots and seeds were present and few plant remains were preserved by charring.

The following scale was used to record the abundance of environmental material:

+ = 1–10 specimens, ++ = 11–50 specimens, +++ = 50+ specimens

Results

The plant assemblage largely comprises modern fibrous roots and seeds. Charred remains are virtually absent with the exception of individual fragments of charcoal/charred wood fragments (Table 1). Fat hen (*Chenopodium* cf. *album*) is present in Sample 1 (context 206) and Sample 2 (context 208). One indeterminate fragment of pottery and fired clay came from the residues.

Significance and recommendations

The samples are largely sterile, with little archaeological material present. Charred remains and finds probably represent accidental inclusions from the surrounding area. The results limit future recommendations for the recovery of plant remains and artefacts. However, should further interventions take place, 20-40 litre samples should be taken from a range of archaeological features to help inform upon agricultural practices and the diet of the occupants in the area.

Table 1. Environmental material and finds from Greatworth

Sample No.	1	2
Fill/Cut	206/207	208/209
Feature type	Ditch	Ditch
Environmental remains		
<i>Chenopodium cf. album</i>	x	x
Charcoal <2mm	x	-
Charcoal >2mm	x	x
Charcoal >5mm	x	x
Finds		
Pot	1	-
Fired clay	-	1

7 DISCUSSION

Five ditches and a pit/ditch were identified during the evaluation. The features were all located in the south and south-east corner of the development area in trenches 2 and 4. None of the ditches were clearly aligned and none of their fills or profiles were sufficiently similar to associate, however they were probably part of a shifting or modified field boundary on the west edge of Greatworth.

Although limited in size, the recovered pottery assemblage indicates that the activity is probably post-Roman, most likely medieval. The absence of post-medieval artefacts, normally plentiful in post-medieval features, further suggests a medieval date for the features is most likely. In general, the small quantity of pottery, animal bone and very low levels of preserved organic and charred remains suggest the activity was sufficiently distant from the core of the settlement and area of occupation to have not accumulated large quantities of waste material.

The presence of Roman pottery in the assemblage, *albeit* a single sherd, further confirms a Roman presence in this area, although as a residual fragment it has little significance here. The sherds of St Neots ware are more interesting as they indicate the possibility that the village, or its agricultural hinterland, had extended at least this far west during the early medieval period. When considered with the absence of later medieval pottery, it is tempting to conclude that the village contracted sometime after the 12th century (possibly during the 14th century), not expanding this far again until the 20th century - a pattern seen in the archaeological record throughout Northamptonshire.

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MOLA
29 September 2016

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
1	1.8m x 30m NE-SW		166.193m	165.403
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Friable dark grey-brown silt with infrequent small stones.	0.20-0.29m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid red-brown silty clay with infrequent small stones.	0.12-26m thick	-
103	Redeposited material	Light brown-grey silty clay with mixed in blue clay and infrequent degraded mudstone flecks.	0.30-0.40m thick	-
104	Natural	Light white-grey silty clay with infrequent mudstone chunks.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
2	1.8m x 30m NNE-SSW		166.665m	166.215
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Topsoil	Friable dark brown-grey silt with infrequent small stones.	0.21-0.26m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Mid red-brown silty clay with infrequent small stones.	0.20m thick	-
203	Natural	Mid yellow-brown and orange clays with infrequent small mudstone.	-	-
204	Fill of [205]	Mid grey-brown clay with mixed mottle orange silt.	0.34m wide 0.10m deep	-
205	Ditch	E-W aligned linear with U-shaped profile and flat base.	0.34m wide 0.10m deep	-
206	Fill of [207]	Mid grey-brown silty clay with occasional small angular mudstone and small charcoal flecks.	1.86m wide 0.33m deep	Flint nodule and bone. Sample No. 1
207	Ditch	NE-SW aligned linear with U-shaped profile and flat base.	1.86m wide 0.33m deep	-
208	Fill of [209]	Mid brown silty clay with patches of orange-grey, with infrequent small pebbles.	0.79m wide 0.33m deep	Pottery. Sample No.2
209	Ditch	NE-SW aligned linear with shallow U-shaped profile and flat base.	0.79m wide 0.33m deep	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
3	1.8m x 30m NNE-SSW		166.826m	166.436
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil	Friable dark grey-brown silt with infrequent small stones.	0.18-21m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay with infrequent small stones.	0.05-0.18m thick	-
303	Natural Interface	Mid grey-yellow clay with infrequent degraded mudstone.	0.06-0.10m thick	-
304	Natural	Light yellow-brown clay with infrequent degraded mudstone.	-	-



Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
4	1.8m x 30m ESE-WNW		166.525m	165.965
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
401	Topsoil	Friable dark brown silt with infrequent small stones.	0.20-0.30m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Mid brown-yellow silty clay with infrequent small stones.	0.14-48m thick	-
403	Natural	Light yellow-brown silty clay with infrequent mudstone.	-	-
404	Fill of [405]	Mid brown silty clay with orange-grey mottling, infrequent small stones and charcoal flecks.	0.80m wide 0.26m deep	
405	Ditch	NE-SW aligned linear with U-shaped profile, steep sides and flat base.	0.80m wide 0.26m deep	
406	Fill of [407]	Mid brown silty clay with orange-grey mottling, infrequent small stones and charcoal flecks.	1.09m wide 0.21m deep	
407	Ditch	NE-SW aligned linear with U-shaped profile and irregular, stony base.	1.09m wide 0.21m deep	
408	Fill of [409]	Light brown silty clay with orange-grey mottling, infrequent small stones and charcoal flecks.	1.00m wide 0.43m deep	
409	Ditch	NE-SW aligned linear with U-shaped profile and flat base.	1.00m wide 0.43m deep	





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