



Land between

Hall Farm & 1 Blueberry Close

Maidwell, Northamptonshire

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Archaeological evaluation

NGR: SP 74660 76790

HER Event number: ENN108614

Site code: MDWL17

OASIS: 110archa1-282614

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one ten archaeology

6 Elm Close, Pebworth, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 8XL

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Front cover; view to the north-east showing Hall Farm and Blueberry Close with former fishpond in foreground

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out during February 2017 on land between Hall Farm and 1 Blueberry Close, Maidwell, Northamptonshire, in advance of a proposal for residential development of the site.

The study site lies in an area where there is considerable archaeological potential for the presence of medieval remains. A large fishpond lies to the south-west and evidence of occupation has been found recently in the field to the west.

Historic mapping (OS 1885-7) shows that the evaluation was concentrated in what appears to be a yard area attached to an earlier 19th century farm now occupied by Blueberry Close. No archaeological remains were recorded during the evaluation, but instead a sequence of three stratified homogenous deposits indicating an open rural landscape. Some modern truncation of these deposits was observed in trench 2, whilst in trench 3, the subsoil layer had been entirely removed when the area to the east was terraced during construction of a yard area associated with the later occupation of Hall Farm built in the 20th century to the south of the earlier farm.

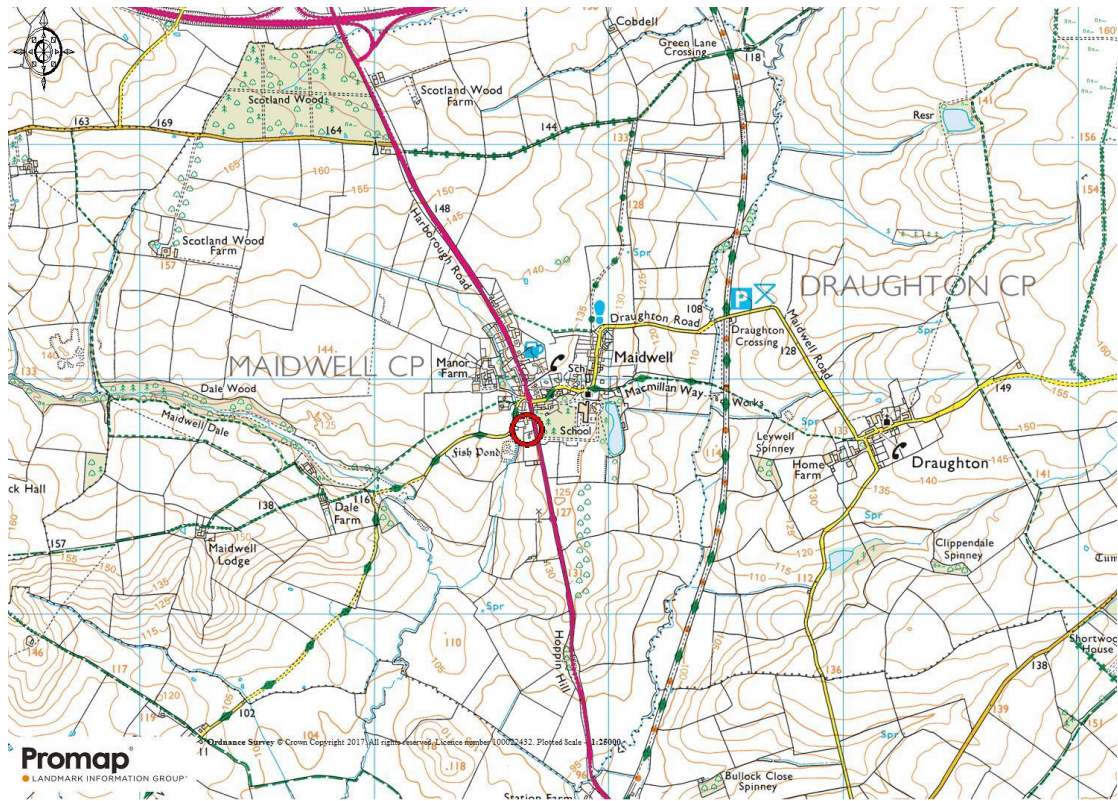


Fig.1; site location (circled in red)



Fig. 2; study site (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of work (Figs. 1 & 2)

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation during 27-28th February and 1st March 2017 on land between Hall Farm and 1 Blueberry Close, Maidwell, Northamptonshire, NN6 9XL at the request of JJB Architects acting on behalf of Gaye Highton and Sarah Harvey. A planning application is to be submitted for the erection of two detached dwellings with access. The proposed development lies within an area of archaeological potential and the Assistant Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council requested an evaluation by trial trenching to provide sufficient archaeological information in which to assess the impact of the application. This is in line with the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The results of the evaluation would be used to determine the likely nature, extent, preservation and importance of any archaeological remains, and how these may be affected by development of the site so that appropriate mitigation strategies could be devised. The evaluation represented an initial investigation, should archaeological deposits be encountered during the trial trenching then an approved programme of archaeological work would be required to record the deposits prior to development.

Geology and topography

The geology maps indicate that the site contains Mudstone to the west and Northampton Sand and Ironstone to the east. The parish is roughly rectangular and lies across a series of spurs which project south and east from a ridge in the north-west. The latter, rising to over 165 m above OD, is capped by Boulder Clay. The down-cutting of small streams has revealed narrow bands of limestone, with larger areas of Upper Lias Clay on the lower ground in the south and east. The east boundary of the parish follows a south-flowing stream at about 90 m. above OD.

The proposed development, comprising an area of 1,480m² lies at the southern end of the settlement of Maidwell, west of the A508 (Harborough Road), east of Blueberry Lane and south of Blueberry Close. Topographically the site lies on a downward slope from the Harborough Road, but terracing in more recent times along the east side of the site has resulted in a level area at approximately 122.5m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) along this part of the proposed site.

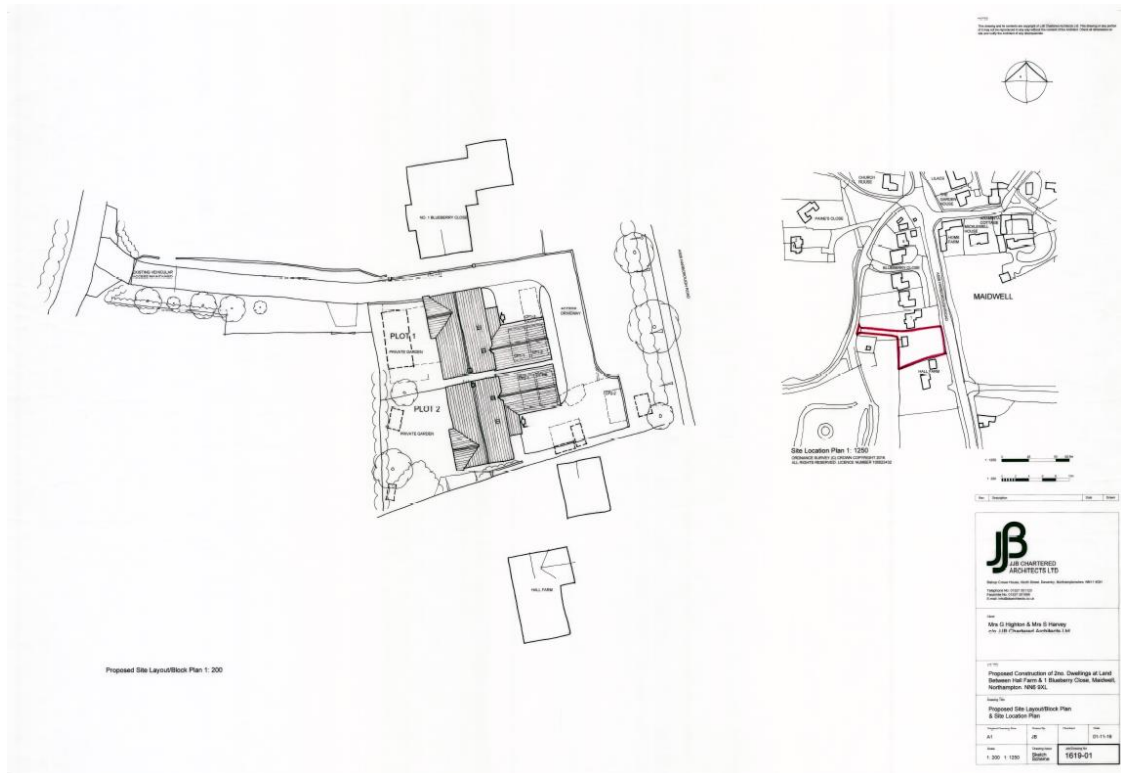


Fig. 3; Plan of the proposed development.

Archaeological and historical background

The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted with a search carried out over a 500m radius centred on the site. A total of 51 monument records and 17 event records are identified and a summary of the more significant information is outlined below.

Prehistoric

4331/0/2; possible enclosure. Aerial photograph shows a partially visible rectangular enclosure. Cropmarks of Iron Age/Romano-British enclosures. Northamptonshire SMR Collection of Aerial Photographs.

4331/0/3; possible prehistoric pit identified from Crop/soil-mark on a good quality aerial photograph. Northamptonshire SMR Collection of Aerial Photographs.

Roman

4331/0/0; unstratified Roman pottery associated with further Iron Age sherds, has been found to the south-east, along the north side of the Draughton Road during fieldwalking.

6647/0/1; a possible prehistoric pit and Romano-British ring ditches found at Maidwell Hall School (Higgins, 2010). Trial trenching revealed potential prehistoric and Roman features and a trackway associated with a former avenue approach to Maidwell Hall from the south.

6647; uncertain prehistoric/ Roman activity

4313; possible Romano-British settlement

4313/0/1; possible Romano-British paving with associated finds. Features were found in the field to the east of The Rectory. At some time before 1901 objects described as 'Roman bricks' and 'a path paved with cobble stones' were found at the east end of Maidwell at SP750770. These finds equate with the Iron Age and Romano -British settlement at SP747772, ie Monument 4331.

1901, *Broadsides: Published Letter From Maidwell Rector to ?Mr Markham*

9916/1/1; possible Romano-British road identified from an aerial photograph Northamptonshire SMR Collection of Aerial Photographs.

4331/0/0; Roman pottery associated with further Iron Age sherds, has been found to the south -east, along the north side of the Draughton Road at SP749772 during fieldwalking.

Saxon/early medieval

4331/0/0; unstratified early Saxon pottery found during fieldwalking. Appears to be on the same site as the Iron Age and Romano-British occupation.

Medieval

4332/1/1; Church of St. Mary The Virgin, 12th-13th century.

4332/0/2; Earthworks of a possible small medieval fishpond on the spring-line of slope.

4332/0/4; probable village closes. On the edge of the village further cropmarks are visible. Most of these appear to be the remains of former closes of the medieval period, but at least one ditch and a series of pits may be earlier in date and therefore more likely relate to MonNo.4331.

4332/0/1; possible medieval/post-medieval fishpond Lying south-west of the village. Rectangular earthwork 85m long x 60m wide situated on the west side of a small stream. The gently sloping valley side has been cut away to give the pond a level bottom on which three slight mounds c.10m diameter are still visible. These were probably islands, or a shallowing of the pond for waterfowl. The water was retained by a massive dam on the south side, more than 1.5m high and 12m long. It has a modern breach through it. The pond is embanked along the whole of its east side and a short section of the west side. The north-east corner has a small delta-like feature within it which may be a result of later activity. The surrounding ridge and furrow appears to post-date the pond (Steane, 1970).

Post-medieval

4332/0/3; medieval/post-medieval hollow way. The earthwork of a hollow way follows the hedge line of field.

4332/4/1; Maidwell Hall School. Country House, now school. Datestone 1637.

Undated

7037/0/0; undated human remains were discovered during groundworks for a garden shed. The bones were not modern (absence of dentistry and signs of high tooth wear). One articulated adolescent was identified, articulated parts of a second of indeterminate age, with disarticulated remains amongst spoil, indicating a third or more individuals. All appeared aligned east-west, with head at west. Natural geology is shattered ironstone and very destructive of bone, which was degraded. The householder was encouraged to stop digging and cover the remains to preserve them in situ (Soden, 2007).

4331/0/4; possible pre-medieval ditch and a series of pits on the edge of the village further cropmarks are visible.

6647/0/3; Possible undated enclosures. A series of positive rectilinear anomalies were identified during a geophysical survey (Smalley, 2009). Other positive linear and area anomalies (6647/0/4) can be identified within the survey area, including a series discrete positive anomalies (6647/0/5) representing possible pits of archaeological origin. A trial trench was positioned over the southern of the two possible enclosures but no archaeological features were revealed (Higgins, 2010).

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Aims of the work

The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area likely to be threatened by the proposed development in order that an informed decision on their importance in a local, regional and national context can be made. This information would clarify whether any remains should be considered for preservation *in situ*, or form the basis of a mitigation strategy.

The national research context was provided by English Heritage (1991 and 1997) and regionally by Cooper (2006), supplemented by Knight, Vyner & Allen (2012).

In particular, the aims of the investigation were to:

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

Research Objective 7E: Investigate the morphology of rural settlements. The East Midlands preserves evidence of a complex landscape, including zones dominated by a hierarchy of nucleated villages, hamlets and farmsteads (Knight, Vyner & Allen, 2012).

Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation comprised three trenches located where feasible to target the main areas of impact and were divided accordingly. Trench 1 was about 8m long, trenches 2 and 3 each approximately 12m in length. All were excavated to a width of 1.50.

Fieldwork methods and recording

The archaeological field work and post-excavation was carried out in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014). All deposits were excavated

removing the overburden under close archaeological supervision and investigated for archaeological features. A plans and sample sections of the trenches were made and recorded during excavation.

RESULTS: GENERAL (Fig. 3)

Soil and ground conditions

Conditions were generally dry during the early stages of excavation, but following rainfall the trenches became partly affected by water ingress. Excavation was relatively smooth in trenches 1 and 2, being made through alternate layers of topsoil and underlying subsoil leaving a clean and visible surface on the natural substrate. In trench 3, however, a layer of compacted modern rubble (301) was broken with a toothed bucket to gain access to the underlying geological horizon (natural clay) and following this excavation continued with the grading bucket.

Reliability of field investigation

Some previous truncation of the underlying deposits was evident at the east end of trench 1 and the north end of trench 2. Excavation of Trench 3 revealed significant truncation of the underlying deposits resulting from an earlier period of development connected with Hall Farm when the existing yard area was created.

Distribution of archaeological deposits

No significant archaeological deposits were encountered during the evaluation. Instead, a relict subsoil immediately overlying the natural clay was recorded in trenches 1 and 2 suggesting an earlier open agricultural environment.

Presentation of results

The results of the excavation (below) are described from the earliest to the latest deposits. The trench was attributed context numbers with a numerical value equivalent to the number of the trench.

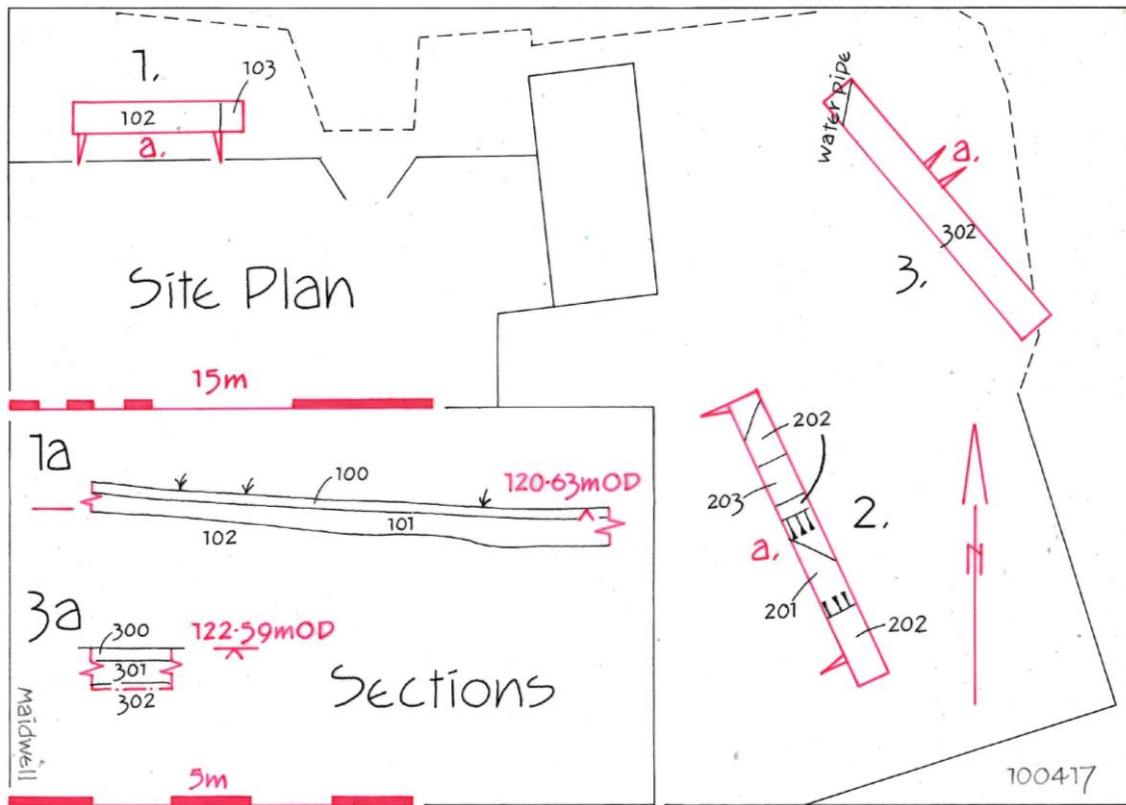


Fig. 4; Site plan showing trench locations

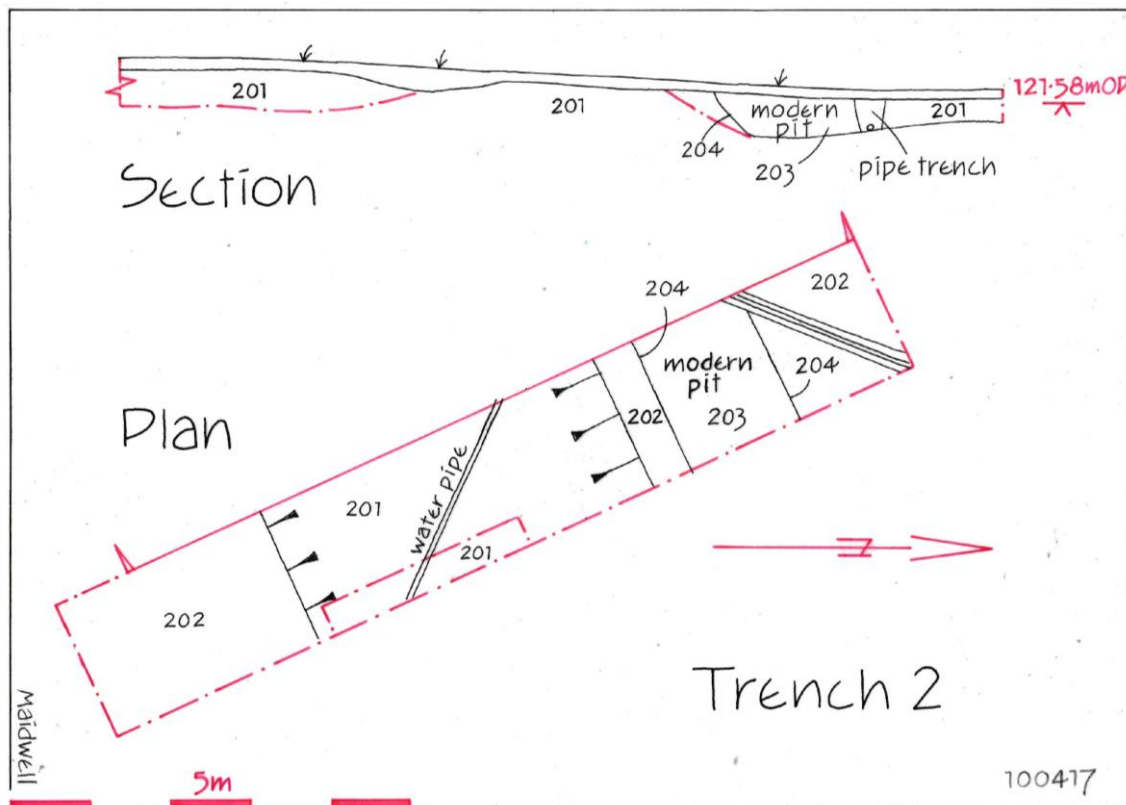


Fig. 5; trench 2, plan and section

RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS (Figs. 4 & 5)

TRENCH 1

Contexts 102 (natural substrate); context 101 (relict subsoil layer); context 100 (topsoil) & context 103 (modern rubble).

The natural substrate (102), which was exposed throughout the length of the trench comprised a light yellowish-brown clay, with the occasional limestone fragment. The surface of this deposit slopes down from about 120.30m AOD at the east end to approx. 120.10m AOD at the west end. No archaeological deposits were revealed cut into or overlying this deposit. At the east end of the trench the clay was directly overlain by modern rubble (103) connected with the creation of access into the adjacent field and excavation was terminated at this point.

Overlying the natural clay throughout the length of the trench was an undated relict subsoil deposit (101) consisting of a mid-yellowish-brown (with reddish tinge), clayey-silt. This varied in depth from 0.25m at the east end increasing to 0.40m at the west end. Sealing this layer to a depth varying between 0.10-0.15m was the existing topsoil (100) representing the current ground level.

TRENCH 2

Context 202 (natural substrate); context 201 (relict subsoil); context 204 (modern pit), filled by 103; context 200 (topsoil).

The natural substrate (202), also comprising a light brown clay was exposed at the north and south end of the trench at a roughly level height of about 121.40m AOD. No archaeological deposits were observed cut into or overlying this layer. At the north end the surface of this clay was truncated by a steep-sided modern pit (104) extending across the trench. After the pit was backfilled (with 103), the north side of the feature was subsequently truncated during the construction of a pipe trench.

Sealing the clay was a deposit of relict subsoil (201), equivalent to deposit 201 in trench 1. This measured 0.30m thick at the north end of the trench, increasing to 0.40m at the south end. Where an existing water main was aligned across the central area of the trench, deposit 201 was left *in situ*. Sealing this layer and the modern features was the existing topsoil layer (200).

TRENCH 3

Context 302 (natural substrate); context 301 (modern rubble) & context 300 (topsoil)

The surface of the natural clay (302) was recorded throughout the trench at a level height of approx. 122.15m AOD. No significant archaeological deposits were observed cut into or overlying this deposit. Instead it was overlain to a depth of 0.30m by a compacted deposit of modern rubble (301) comprising brick, concrete, gravel, and stone chippings. This was then sealed by modern topsoil (300) to a depth 0.15m.

FINDS

Finds were sparse and consisted of two small fragments of abraded red brick and a single fragment of modern roof tile from layer 101 in trench 1. In trench 2 the subsoil deposit (201) produced two fragments of modern roof tile, a single fragment of red brick and three unidentifiable pieces of animal bone. These were not retained.⁹

Environmental data

Palaeo-environmental evidence

none of the deposits exposed during the excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.



Plate 1; trench 1, view to the south-west



Plate 2; section 1a, detail



Plate 3; trench 2 & section 2a, view to the north-west



Plate 4; trench 3, view to the north



Plate 5; section 3a

DISCUSSION

Previous fieldwork has led to the discovery of a number of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon sites in Maidwell. A large Iron Age, Roman and early Saxon settlement (monument 4331) identified as a series of enclosures from aerial photographs, lies north of the village. Some Iron Age pottery has also been found to the north-west of these enclosures and Roman pottery, associated with further Iron Age sherds, have been found to the south-east along the north side of the Draughton Road. To the south, on the edge of the village, further cropmarks are visible (monument 6647/0/1). Most of these appear to be the remains of former closes of the medieval period, but an evaluation south of Maidwell Hall School (Higgins, 2010) revealed a pit with a worked piece of flint of possible Bronze Age date and ring ditches, some of which produced Roman pottery. To the south of this area is a possible east-west aligned Romano-British road (9916/1/1) identified from an aerial photograph.

The main medieval monuments in the parish are two fishponds, one at Dale Farm and the other (4332/0/1) is to the south-west of Hall Farm (see Appendix 1) where agricultural earthworks (ridge & furrow) are also present. Recent evaluation work on the west side of Blueberry Lane found evidence for medieval occupation in the form of wall foundations, rubble spreads and a hearth (Archaeology Warwickshire, 2014). These features, which are indicative of habitation, confirm that the medieval settlement at Maidwell extended further west than previously anticipated.

The historic mapping (OS 1885-7) shows the study site as part of yard area attached to a former farm situated in the area now occupied by Blueberry Close. Hall Farm is a 20th century construction to the south. Although the potential for medieval deposits to survive within the site was recognised, the evaluation revealed no archaeological remains. Instead a sequence of three stratified homogenous deposits were recorded comprising a natural clay overlain by a relict undated subsoil, sealed by the existing topsoil. The evidence indicates an open rural landscape. Some modern truncation of these deposits was observed at the north end of trench 2, whilst in trench 3, the subsoil layer had been entirely removed down to the surface of the clay during construction of a farm yard area carried out in connection with occupation of Hall Farm and included the adjacent area to the east where the ground, which slopes down from Harborough Road, was terraced.

Summary of results

The evaluation has shown that there is unlikely to be significant archaeological deposits surviving within the study site. Instead, the results revealed a general sequence of three stratified homogenous deposits indicating an open agricultural landscape. The original ground level slopes westwards down from the Harborough Road which borders the site, but modern terracing connected with the construction of a 20th century yard during the occupation of Hall farm the eastern edge of the site has resulted in significant truncation of the underlying deposits.

Significance

The results of the evaluation suggest that there are no archaeological deposits present within the proposed development area. Trenches I and 2 show that deposits to the west and within the central area site survive intact and that these comprise a stratigraphic sequence indicative of an open agricultural landscape. To the site the underlying deposits have been affected terracing associated with 20th century development.

Impact of development

The impact of the development is likely to be from the excavation of strip foundations, services and for the access roads and drives. The results of the trial trenching suggest that no archaeological deposits are likely to be present within the areas of proposed development and that further excavation will have no impact.

Archive Location

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The physical archive will be held by the contractor until deposition can be arranged with the Northamptonshire Museum Service.

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APPENDIX 1; medieval fishpond (Historic Environment Record; 4332/0/1)



Plate 6; view to the south



Plate 7; view to the south-east



Plate 8; view to the north-east

APPENDIX 2; OASIS

| | |
|--|---|
| Project name | Land between Hall Farm and 1 Blueberry Close, Maidwell, Northamptonshire; archaeological evaluation |
| Project dates | Start: 27-02-2017 End: 01-03-2017 |
| Previous/future work | No / No |
| Any associated project reference codes | MDWL17 - Sitecode |
| Type of project | Field evaluation |
| Site status | None |
| Current Land use | Other 5 - Garden |
| Monument type | NONE None |
| Significant Finds | BRICK Modern |
| Methods & techniques | "Targeted Trenches" |
| Development type | Rural residential |
| Prompt | Planning condition |
| Position in the planning process | Between deposition of an application and determination |
| Country | England |
| Site location | NORTHAMPTONSHIRE DAVENTRY MAIDWELL Land between Hall Farm and 1 Blueberry Close |
| Postcode | NN6 9XL |
| Study area | 1480 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | SP 74660 76790 52.383663819212 -0.902938036006 52 23 01 N 000 54 10 W Point |
| Height OD / Depth | Min: 120.1m Max: 122.15m |
| Name of Organisation | one ten archaeology |
| Project brief originator | Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body |
| Project design originator | one ten archaeology |
| Project director/manager | sean cook |
| Project supervisor | sean cook |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Landowner |
| Physical Archive Exists? | No |
| Digital Archive recipient | OASIS |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Paper Archive recipient | county museum |
| Paper Media available | "Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Plan","Report","Section" |
| Publication type | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) |
| Title | Land between Hall Farm and 1 Blueberry Close, Maidwell, Northamptonshire |
| Author(s)/Editor(s) | Cook, S |
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