



Iron Age settlement and medieval features at Quinton House School, Upton, Northampton

by

ANNE FOARD-COLBY AND CHARLOTTE WALKER

with contributions by

Andy Chapman, Pat Chapman, Karen Deighton, Tora Hylton,
Dennis Jackson, Iain Soden and Tim Upson-Smith

SUMMARY

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological excavation, prior to development of a sports hall, on 0.18ha of land within a walled garden at Quinton House School, Upton, Northampton. A small group of pits or postholes contained pottery dated to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age. The continuation of a pit alignment seen in previous excavations to the east was confirmed, although only a single pit lay within the site. Most of a small Iron Age enclosure, probably dating to the later middle Iron Age, was excavated. The enclosure had seen intensive use, containing a circular sub-enclosure, which may have been a roundhouse ring ditch, two small rectangular sub-enclosures and other boundary ditches and scattered postholes and pits, the latter lying mainly close to the enclosure ditch. The pottery assemblage was dominated by large storage jars. The enclosure lies to the west of an area of more extensive contemporary settlement examined in previous excavations, with the Roman town of Duston lying further to the east. A medieval ditch system and an associated hollow-way, dated to the 13th-16th centuries, may lie near the northern end of Upton deserted medieval village. A later medieval stone structure, a stone-lined pit and adjacent wall, were constructed over the filled ditches. A number of quarry pits at the western end of the site produced pottery, clay tobacco-pipes and glass bottles dating from the late 17th to 19th centuries.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological excavation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology during January and February 2007 on 0.18ha of land within the walled garden at Quinton House School, Upton, Northampton, NGR SP7189 6018 (Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Broadway Malyan, acting on behalf of their clients Cognita Ltd, Quinton House School, following an archaeological condition attached to the planning consent for the construction of a sports hall.

A field evaluation of the site, comprising trial excavation based on the results of geophysical survey, had been undertaken in January 2006 (Butler and Foard-Colby 2006). This established the presence of Iron Age settlement features in this area and their probable

connection with an adjacent area of Iron Age and Roman settlement to the east (Walker and Maull this volume).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project manager was Anthony Maull, and the fieldwork was supervised by Anne Foard-Colby, with the assistance of Mark Patenall, Jonathon Elston, Maria Gale, Miranda Haigh, Paul Kajewski, James Ladocha, Rhiannon Mann and Angela Warner. The illustrations are by Jacqueline Harding, Hale Moharramzadeh and Pat Walsh. During the excavation, a metal detector survey was undertaken by Steve Critchley of the exposed archaeological areas and the spoil heaps. The full client report (Foard-Colby and Walker 2007) is available from the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and online through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The client report has been edited for publication by Pat Chapman and Andy Chapman.

BACKGROUND

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site is in the south-east corner of a Victorian walled garden within the grounds of Quinton House School, which is on the lower slopes of a ridge to the north of the River Nene, west of Northampton and south of the A45 Weedon Road. The topography of the development area is generally flat, at 84mOD.

The British Geological Survey has mapped the development area as glacial sands and gravels at the north and Glaciolacustrine deposits at the south. These drift deposits overlie Northampton Sand and Ironstone and Upper Lias Clay respectively (BGS 1990, Sheet 185).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The development site lies within an area of extensive archaeological interest, with the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) listing sites from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods.

Although fieldwalking in the vicinity of the site has recovered only a scattering of prehistoric flints, an estimated 25,000 implements and cores dating from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age were recovered from an



ANNE FOARD-COLBY AND CHARLOTTE WALKER

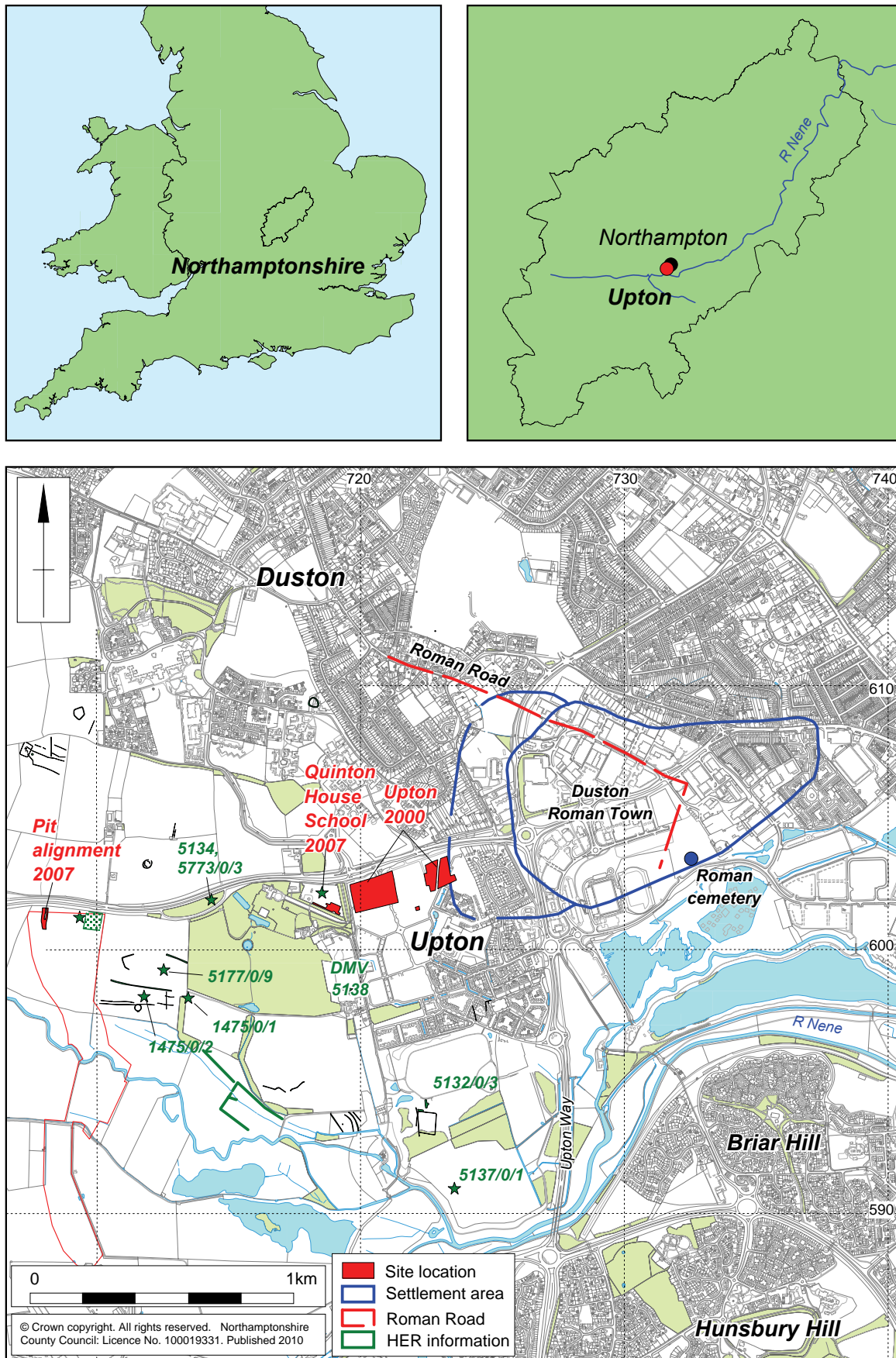
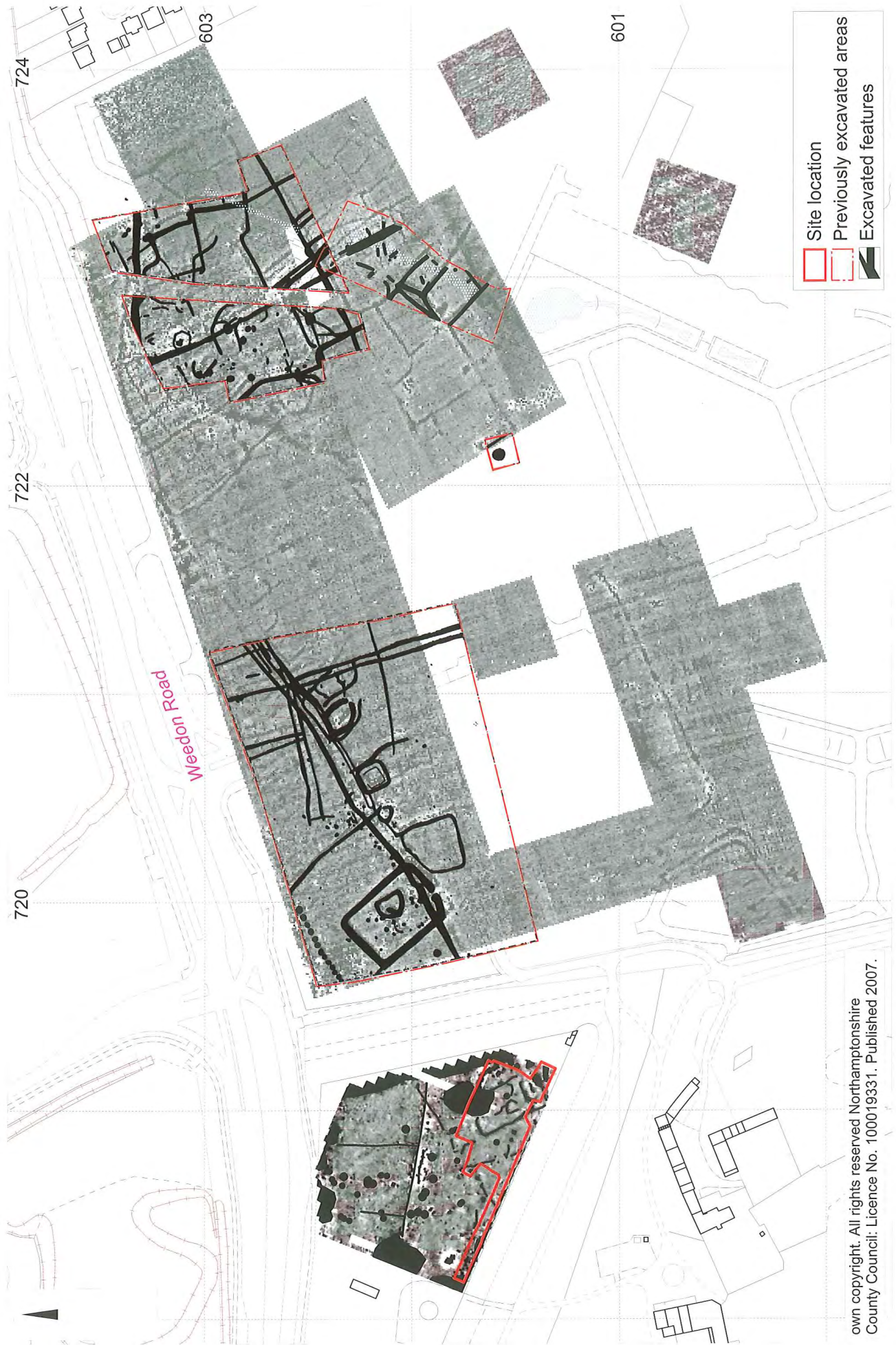


Fig 1 Site location and HER data



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Fig 2 Excavated sites 2000 and 2007 and geophysical surveys

area of around 50ha at Duston during ironstone extraction between 1904 and 1912. This number of tools indicates that a substantial population was utilising local resources throughout the prehistoric period.

Early prehistoric monuments in the area include a Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Briar Hill, 1km to the south (Fig 1), and a further causewayed enclosure is known at Dallington 3km to the north.

There is evidence of extensive Iron Age settlement in the area, including an early Iron Age pit alignment and part of an enclosed mid-late Iron Age settlement which was excavated in 2000 (Maull 2001; Maull and Walker this volume). The pit alignment and succeeding settlement was shown to continue at least as far as the current site during recent evaluation (Butler and Foard-Colby 2006; Fig 2). Other, probably associated features were discovered during small-scale evaluation to the north of the walled garden in 1989, including Iron Age ditches and pits, as well as evidence of pottery manufacture (unpublished). About 500m to the west of the site, a group of Iron Age pits and possibly associated ditches suggest another settlement focus (Jackson *et al* 1969). Further west, another length of pit alignment, either the same as or related to the alignment seen at Quinton School and to the east of the school, has been recorded by geophysical survey and limited excavation in advance of the new Cross Valley Link Road (Carlyle this volume).

Further afield, Hunsbury hillfort, on high ground to the south of the River Nene, would have been a dominant feature of the surrounding landscape and economy until the late 1st century BC (Fig 1). Following the abandonment of the hillfort, a new settlement and economic focus emerged in Duston, to the north of the river, and this developed into a substantial Roman 'small town', becoming one of the most significant undefended settlements in the county. Although poorly understood due to destruction during extensive mining in the 19th century, it is thought to have been inhabited until the 4th century, largely functioning as a local commercial centre.

Early/middle Saxon settlement features have been found to the west of the current site. A large sunken-featured building (SFB) was found during the widening of the A45 in 1965. The building contained more than 60 loomweights and was interpreted as a weaving shed which had been destroyed by fire (Jackson *et al* 1969). More evidence of SFBs and posthole buildings were found during evaluation about 200m further to the north (NAU 1990). These features may form separate elements within a dispersed settlement pattern. Excavation in the former walled garden of Upton Hall to the west of the site before the construction of the new sports field revealed walls, ditches and some Saxon pottery. The Saxon settlement may have been a direct antecedent of the medieval village.

Well-preserved earthwork remains of the deserted village of Upton lie just to the south of the site and have a remarkably regular form, in that they consist of a central north-south hollow-way, bounded on either side by short closes (Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) 165). The eastern side of the site once had a narrow back-lane

(RCHME 1985; Fig 3). The earthworks are cut through at their northern end by garden remains relating to the Hall and any relationship between the church and village has been lost. This is a problem in terms of interpretation because of the distance between the surviving earthworks and the church. It has been variously thought that the village once continued as far as the church, that the surviving earthworks are one part of a polyfocal village with another focus closer to the church, or that they represented the re-location of the village from an earlier settlement around the church (*ibid*). The post-medieval Upton Mill is situated on the river to the south of the village remains.

SUMMARY OF SITE CHRONOLOGY

The excavated area was 0.18ha in extent, comprising a roughly rectangular area measuring 48m east-west by 31m north-south, the area to be occupied by the new sports hall, with a trench, 5m wide, extending 53m westward along the line of the new access road (Fig 4). In the south-east corner of the site the extent of mechanical soil stripping was also limited by the need to avoid damage to the roots of adjacent mature trees. The area of the sports hall took in much of a single Iron Age enclosure, although it is unfortunate that the south-eastern corner lay beyond the excavated area, so the relationship between the enclosure and a possible linear boundary ditch that may have been a continuation of the boundary system seen to the east (Walker and Maull this volume) could not be explored. Medieval and later features lay in the western part of the excavated area and along the trench to the west.

The chronology of the excavated site is summarised below (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of site chronology

Period/phase	Description
Neolithic-Bronze Age	Residual worked flint
Late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age	Postholes
Early/middle Iron Age	Pit alignment
Later middle Iron Age	Linear boundary ditch Domestic Enclosure
Medieval	Boundary ditches Stone structures Hollow-way/road
Post-medieval	Quarry pits and rubbish pit

NEOLITHIC-BRONZE AGE ACTIVITY

There are no features, but 23 pieces of flint were recovered as residual finds in later features.

THE WORKED FLINT by Andy Chapman

The raw material is typically translucent light grey to grey-brown vitreous flint, with the occasional piece of opaque grey granular flint. The cortex, when present, varies from



IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AND MEDIEVAL FEATURES AT QUINTON HOUSE SCHOOL, UPTON, NORTHAMPTON

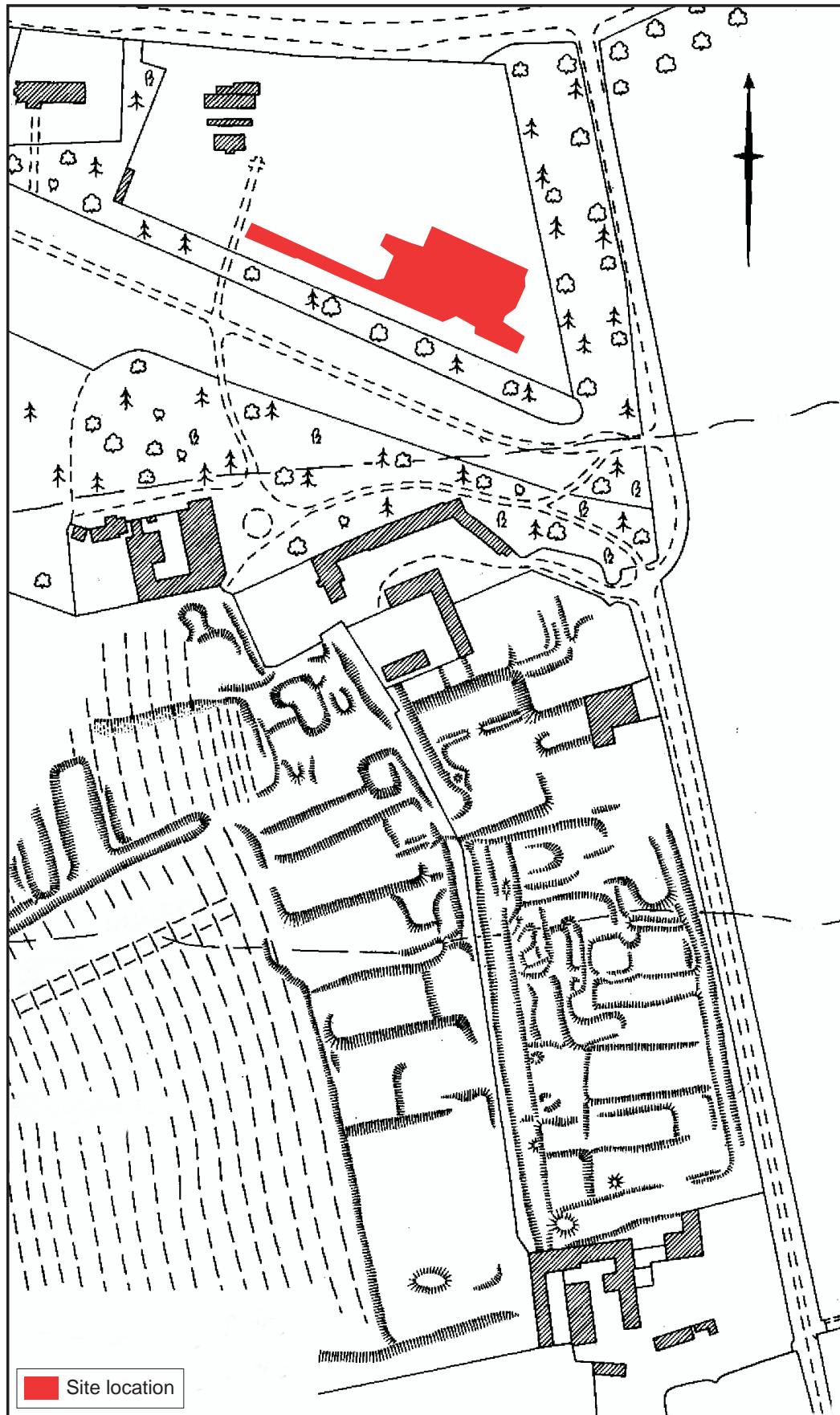


Fig 3 Upton deserted medieval village (from RCHME 1985)

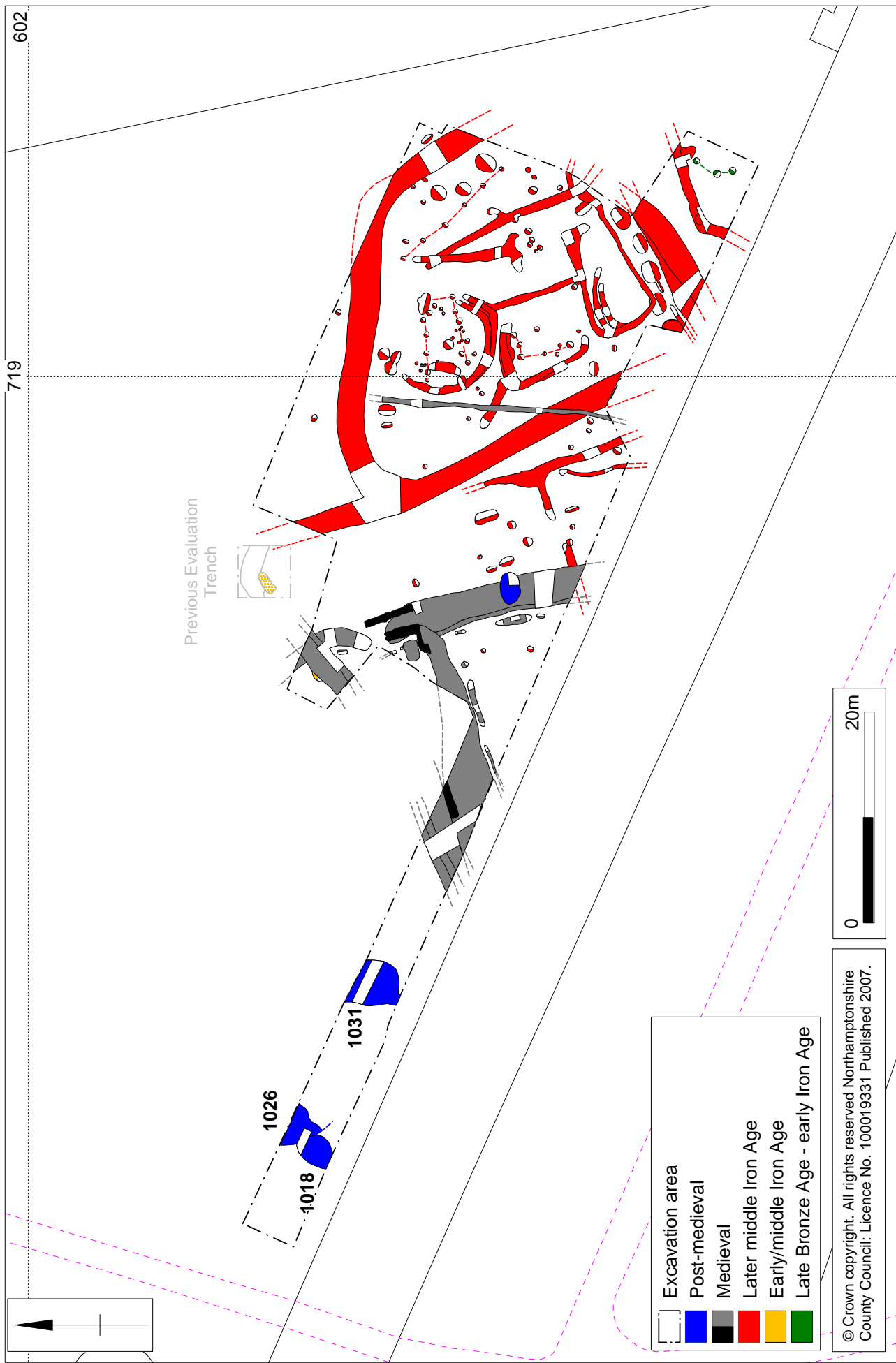


Fig 4 General site plan

white or light brown to dark brown and grey. Fourteen of the pieces are flakes, ranging from pieces evidently struck from prepared cores to irregular flakes/chunks. They are typically squat, with some hinge fractures, and some may be the result of accidental damage. A few have irregular edge damage, which could be a result of either casual utilisation or accidental damage. There are also two blades struck from prepared cores. One of these is 25mm wide and had probably been retouched and utilised, but only the dorsal end survives. There is a single small, single platform core, 40mm long.

The group includes six retouched pieces. An irregular flake has miscellaneous edge retouch, and may be an unfinished discoidal scraper. A thick flake has been crudely retouched at one end to form an end scraper, 45mm long by 20mm wide and from 6-17mm thick. A squat flake has fine pressure-flaked retouch around one edge, and may be an unfinished implement, perhaps intended to be an arrowhead, and a further small flake has similarly fine edge retouch. An elongated flake struck from a prepared core is edge damaged on one side while the other has been retouched to form a cutting edge, which has been blunted by use. The final worked piece is a 44mm length from a lozenge-sectioned rod of grey granular flint, up to 26mm wide by 18mm thick, with the original flake scars partially removed by polishing. This polished flint rod may have been part of a chisel or gouge.

This small group of flint has no consistent typological characteristics and would seem to be a mixed group of residual material spanning the Neolithic to early Bronze Age.

LATE BRONZE AGE/EARLY IRON AGE POSTHOLES

Three postholes or small pits lay at the south-eastern corner of the site (Fig 5, S1). They were 0.41-0.55m in diameter by 0.08-0.18m deep, with steep-sided profiles and flat bases, and were between 1.0m and 1.7m apart. The fills consisted of medium to dark orange-brown sandy clay with charcoal flecks and occasional gravel inclusions. Two of the postholes, 615 and 617, contained a considerable amount of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery (Fig 9, 1-3). Some of the similar features excavated on the site to the east also included quantities of pottery, possibly as some form of ritual deposition (Maull and Walker this volume). It is possible that similar acts were also being undertaken here. The shallow ditch, 750, to the west of the postholes was cut by a middle Iron Age pit and may have been either contemporary with the posthole/pit group (S1) or the later settlement (Fig 5).

THE LATE BRONZE AGE/EARLY IRON AGE POTTERY *by Dennis Jackson and Andy Chapman*

Sixty sherds of pottery, weighing 809g, were recovered from the fill of a posthole/pit, 615. Much of this material is from a single vessel, a jar or bowl with an abrupt shoulder carination, a concave neck and an everted rounded rim. The angle of the shoulder is decorated with semi-circular fingertip/fingernail impressions with similar impressions around the outer edge of the rim (Fig 9, 1). The non-

joining body sherds are undecorated. The fabric is soft, with a grey-brown core containing numerous voids of leached inclusions, probably crushed shell. Around the neck and rim the inner and outer surfaces are orange-brown, but below this the surface is mottled brown to grey while the interior is brown to grey-brown. There are a few sherds from a second similarly shouldered vessel, but in an even softer fabric, and thus poorly preserved. In addition, there are joining rim sherds from a plain upright jar, with a flat-topped undulating rim, in a sandy fabric, with fine quartz grains (Fig 9, 2).

The fill of a nearby posthole, 617, contained a few sherds of a similar fabric and also the rim of a small, thin-walled jar with a high abrupt, neck carination. The core is grey-black, with a grey-black inner surface. The outside of the jar above the carination is grey-black and brown below this, and has been lightly burnished (Fig 9, 3).

There was a single small body sherd in a similar fabric from the fill of a nearby pit 742 within the Iron Age enclosure.

The carinated vessels, one with fingertip/fingernail decoration and the other with a lightly burnished surface, can be broadly dated to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age. Activity of this date was evident on the adjacent Upton site (Maull 2001, Walker and Maull this volume) both through the pottery assemblage and confirmed by radiocarbon dating.

Catalogue of illustrated late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery (Fig 9)

- 1 Carinated jar/bowl, fingertip/nail decoration on shoulder and rim. Posthole, 615
- 2 Plain jar, with flat-topped undulating rim. Posthole, 615
- 3 Carinated jar, with rim thickened externally, black with burnished surface. Posthole, 617

EARLY/MIDDLE IRON AGE PIT ALIGNMENT

A single pit in the west of the site, 995, was part of the pit alignment, aligned north-east to south-west, previously recorded during excavations further to the east (Fig 5; Maull 2000, Maull and Walker this volume). The oval pit, which had been truncated by overlying medieval ditches, was perhaps 2m in diameter and 0.70m deep, with fairly steep sides and a flat base. The fill was homogeneous medium to dark orange-brown sandy loam. Two further pits had been uncovered in the evaluation trenches (Fig 4). To the south-west, further pits in the alignment appear to have been entirely truncated by medieval ditches.

MIDDLE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT

BOUNDARY DITCHES

The boundary system seen in the excavations to the east comprised a linear ditch aligned north-east to south-west, parallel to the pit alignment but set some way to the south, with intermittent perpendicular ditches and a series of enclosures abutting the main boundary ditch (Walker and Maull this volume). This same pattern can

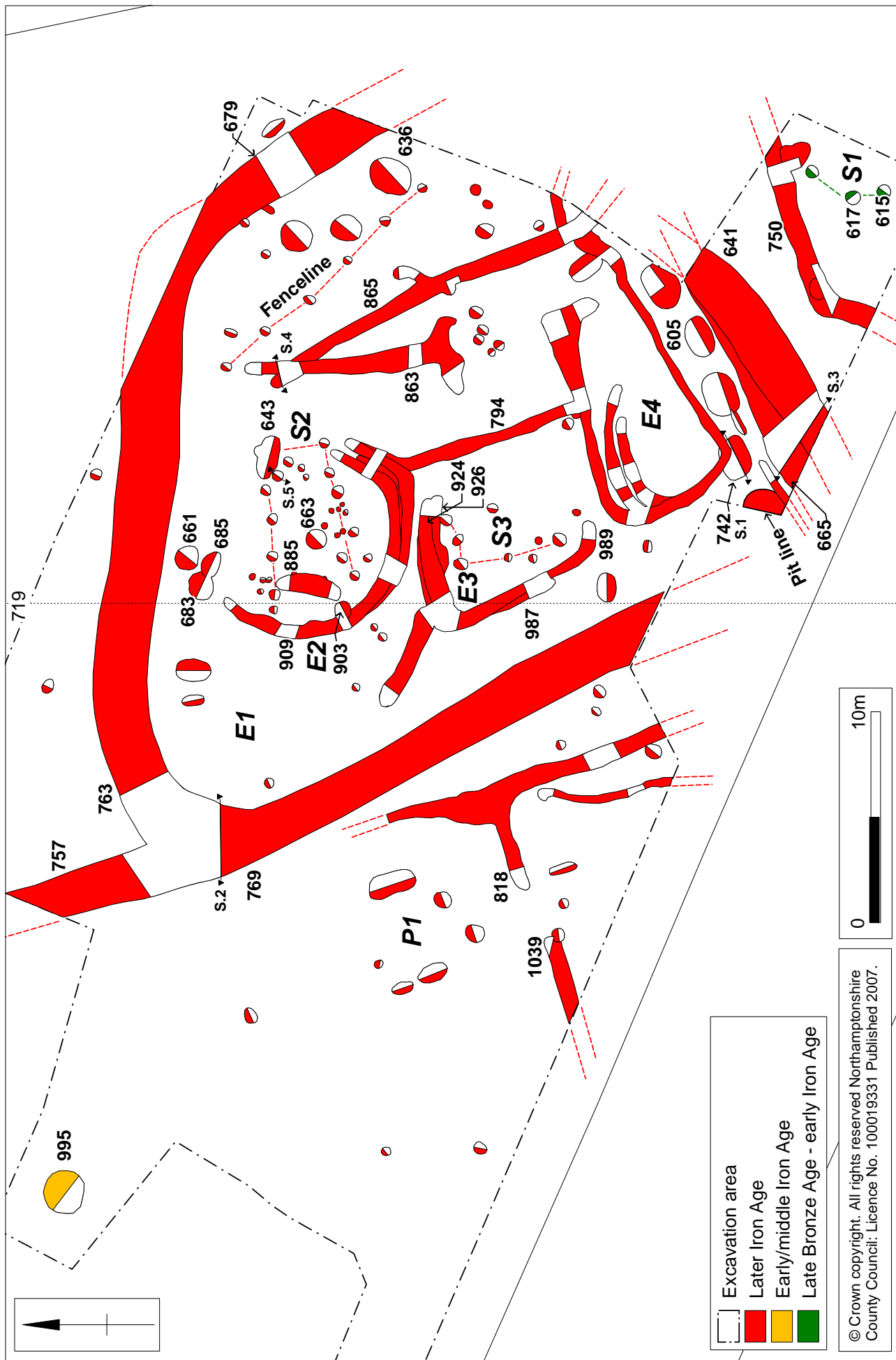


Fig 5 Late Bronze Age pits and the middle Iron Age enclosure



IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AND MEDIEVAL FEATURES AT QUINTON HOUSE SCHOOL, UPTON, NORTHAMPTON



Fig 6 North-west corner of enclosure during excavation of ditch, looking east



Fig 7 Enclosure ditch, 769, north-west corner, Section 2, looking south-east



be seen at Quinton House School. To the south-east, an early ditch, 665, aligned north-east to south-west may be part of the boundary system continuing from the north-east, while a later recut, 641, may be the southern of the enclosure imposed over the existing boundary ditch. Ditch 665 was at least 1.40m wide and 0.75m deep (Fig 8, Section 3). The primary fill was firm light brownish-grey silty clay, resulting from initial weathering, while the later fill was a uniform mid grey-brown silty clay with rare stones and charcoal, perhaps indicating that it was deliberately backfilled, perhaps prior to the excavation of the enclosure ditch. The linear western side of the enclosure, 769, may have been respecting an existing boundary ditch, 757, set at right-angles to the principal boundary and extending to the north of the enclosure.

THE ENCLOSURE (E1)

The D-shaped enclosure measured 38m north-west to south-east by 29m north-east to south-west, and had a central space of just under 0.1ha (Fig 5). There was no entrance causeway within the excavation area, so either there was no causeway or it was located in the unexcavated area to the east.

The enclosure ditch varied between 2.23-2.86m wide by 0.91-1.41m deep, increasing to 3.20-3.53m wide and 1.50-1.60m deep on the north-west corner (Figs 6 and 7; Fig 8, Section 2). Its profile was predominately a steep-sided V-shape, although to the south, where it truncated the earlier boundary ditch, it was shallower and rounded (Fig 8, Section 3, 641). The fills were broadly similar in composition, comprising light to mid grey-brown or orange-brown silty clays with orange patches and redeposited natural clays, although the primary fill generally contained more clay or silt. Deposition appears to have taken place over a period of time with a gradual filling of the ditch, and there were occasional sherds of middle Iron Age pottery and low quantities of charred cereal remains.

The interior of the enclosure contained a dense palimpsest of sub-enclosures, linear ditches, pits and postholes indicating that the enclosed area was the focus for intensive activity confined within several defined and delimited spaces.

INTERNAL SUB-DIVISIONS

Within the enclosure there were three sub-enclosures dividing the interior into specific functional areas (Fig 5). To the north, there was a semicircular sub-enclosure, E2, 8.0m in diameter, which may have been a ring ditch encircling a small roundhouse. The ditch had been recut to the south and east, reducing the diameter slightly. The later ditch was 0.43-0.80m wide and 0.20-0.24m deep, with a steep-sided U-shaped profile at the eastern end and a wide V-shape to the west. While the fills of the earlier ditch consisted of more orange-brown sandy silts, the fills of the later ditch were of mid grey silty clay with frequent gravel inclusions. No finds were recovered from the ditch fills.

Within the enclosed area of E2 there was a scatter of postholes (Fig 5). Some of these lay along two very roughly parallel lines, S2, aligned south-west to north-

east, and this might be the remains of a rectangular structure, approximately 7.5m long by 3.5m wide. The postholes were 0.40m-0.58m in diameter by 0.07m-0.19m deep, with U-shaped profiles, and fills of dark orange-brown silty clay with some gravel and charcoal inclusions.

Three pits lay within E2 (Fig 5). To the west there was an oval pit, 885, 3.1m long by 1.0m wide and 0.35m deep. It was filled with dark orange-brown sandy clay with some gravel. In the centre of the enclosure there was a circular pit, 663, 0.88m in diameter by 0.38m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. The fills consisted of mid orange-brown silty sand, and whilst the lower fill contained some medium-sized stones, the upper fill contained larger limestone fragments, a maximum of 0.15m long. A shallow pit, 903, that cut the enclosure ditch on its western side, contained charcoal and occasional burnt limestone fragment, as well as the largest assemblage of charred cereal remains found on site.

Several pits were lay just beyond the ditch terminals of Enclosure E2. Three pits near the western terminal, 661, 683 and 685, were sub-circular, 0.80-1.50m in diameter and 0.17-0.46m deep. The fills generally consisted of dark orange-brown silty clay with large pieces of limestone, charcoal flecks and middle Iron Age pottery. One of these pits, 661, contained large quantities of mostly processed charred cereal, including hulled barley. An oval pit, 643, near the eastern terminal, was 2.15m long, 1.23m wide by 0.35m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. The primary fill comprised dark red, burnt, sandy clay with a thin ashy, charcoal layer which contained burnt pieces of limestone. The upper fill comprised dark grey-brown silty clay with some large pebbles and burnt stone fragments. The pit fills contained large quantities of mostly processed charred cereal remains including hulled wheat and the only examples of oats and peas found on site. The pit was cut by a posthole, perhaps associated with the possible structure, S2.

To the south of Enclosure E2, there was a rectangular enclosure, E3, measuring 8m by 6m. A recut L-shaped ditch, 924, 0.66-0.48m wide and 0.15-0.46m deep, with steep sides and a flat base, formed the northern and western arms of the enclosure (Fig 5). The northern arm of the ditch was the more substantial of the two, and had a silty clay fill that was an unusual yellow-brown colour, which may indicate that the fills were subject to more leaching than other features on site. The eastern boundary, 794, was a gully, 0.35m wide and 0.11m deep, aligned north-west to south-east and running between E2 and E4 (Fig 5). The southern side of the enclosure was formed by the northern arm of enclosure E4, making it likely that the two were in use at the same time. Entrances lay to the north-east and south-west, measuring 1.50m and 0.75m wide respectively, although the opening to the north-eastern was largely blocked by the ditch of enclosure E2.

A semi-rectilinear arrangement of at least seven postholes, measuring approximately 6m by 3m, suggests the presence of an internal structure, S3. The postholes were circular, 0.25-0.54m wide and 0.08-0.22m deep, with shallow to steep sides and a flat base.

To the south there was another rectangular sub-

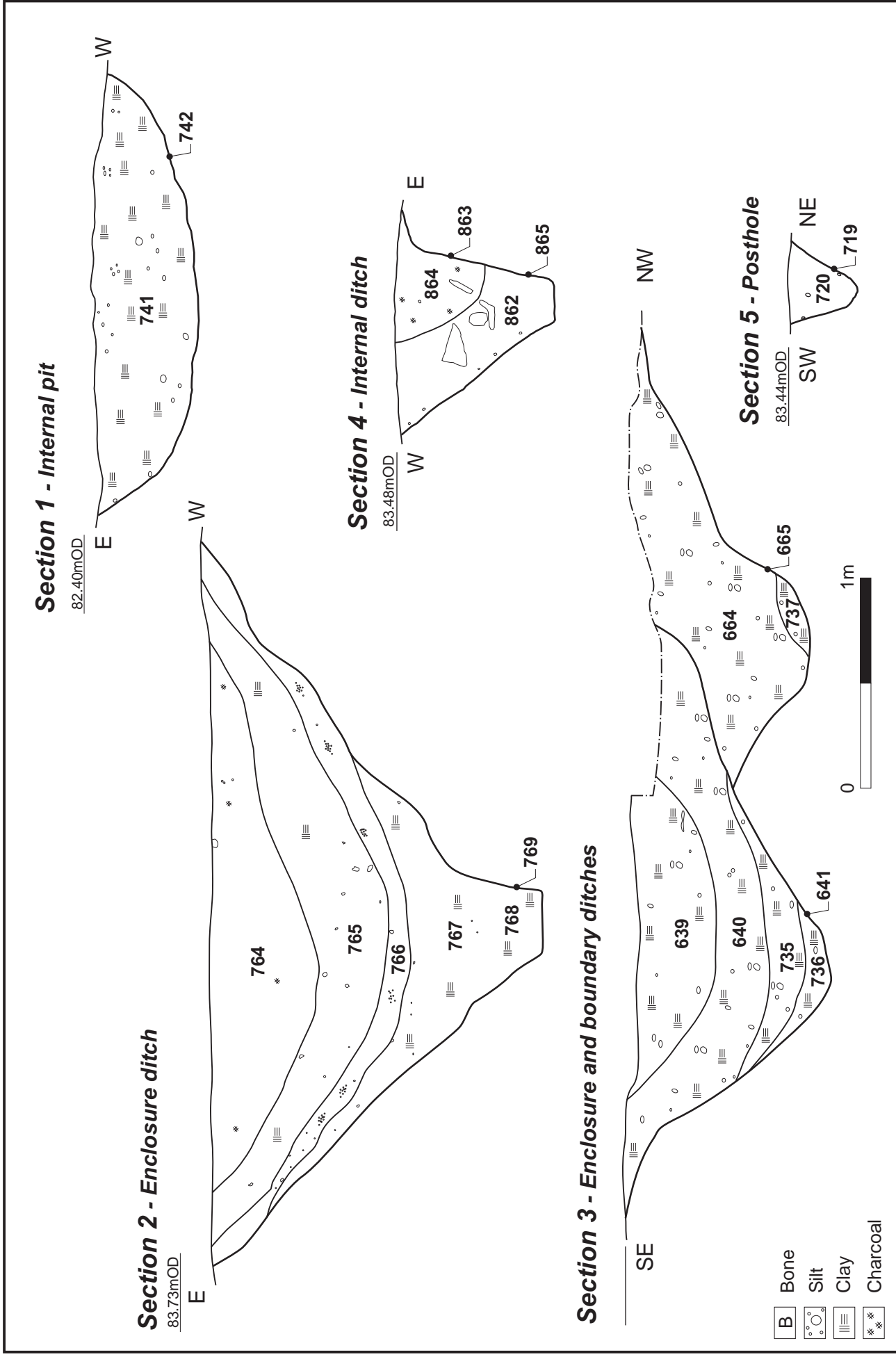


Fig 8 Sections of Iron Age features



enclosure, 9m long by 5m wide (E4). The ditch had recut at least twice, and the later ditch was 0.45-1.30m wide by 0.15-0.43m deep. The fills consisted of dark orange-brown silty clay with few finds, suggesting it had silted naturally. There was an entrance at the eastern end of the enclosure.

OTHER DITCHES, PITS AND POSTHOLES

Five pits lay closely adjacent to the southern arm of the enclosure ditch (Fig 5, pit line). The westernmost pit, 742, was cut by the internal enclosure E4, suggesting that the pits belonged with an early phase of use (Fig 5). They were 2.00-2.25m long, 1.30-1.60m wide and 0.37-0.52m deep, with rounded corners and flat bases, and 0.8-1.0m apart. The fills were uniform and homogeneous, consisting of medium to dark orange-brown silty clay with occasional gravel and small ironstone fragments. The nature of the fills suggests that they were deliberately backfilled, possibly with the original upcast material, rather than being allowed to gradually silt up.

A linear ditch, 865, was aligned north-west to south-east within the eastern half of the enclosure (Fig 5). At its widest point it was 1.0m wide by 0.77m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. It was cut by another linear ditch, 863, 0.60-1.0m wide by 0.42m deep, on a slightly different alignment (Fig 5 and Fig 8, Section 4). The northern terminals of both ditches contained a large quantity of middle Iron Age pottery, over 60% of the entire assemblage from the site, largely comprising the remains of thick-walled storage jars.

A line of six postholes on the eastern side of the enclosure may have formed a fence aligned north-west to south-east and at least 7m long (Fig 5, Fence line). The postholes were 0.35-0.50m in diameter by 0.07-0.20m deep, and the fills comprised light orange-brown silty clay with infrequent small gravel.

Three subcircular pits lay to the east of the fence line. They were 1.10-2.30m in diameter by 0.05-0.21m deep. One was steep-sided with a flat base, while the other two were shallow with U-shaped profiles. The fills comprised mid grey-brown sandy clay with some gravel inclusions.

There were other small pits and postholes within the enclosure, E1, but there was no discernible relationship with the sub-enclosures or their structures and they were undated.

EXTERNAL FEATURES

To the west of the enclosure, a T-shaped junction of linear ditches, 818 and 1039, may have formed the north-eastern corner of another enclosure (Fig 5). The ditches were between 0.56-1.02m wide and 0.38-0.45m deep. The easternmost ditch had a very narrow, steep-sided profile, suggesting it may have held a timber palisade. The primary fill was leached light orange-brown silty or sandy clay. An entrance through ditch 818/1039 was 2.30m wide. Some postholes and a short length of gully lay to the south of the entrance, and a cluster of small, shallow pits and postholes lay to the north, although these produced no dating evidence (Fig 5, P1).

THE MIDDLE IRON AGE POTTERY

by Andy Chapman and Dennis Jackson

The bulk of the material recovered from the site, 386 sherds, weighing 5920g, dates to the middle Iron Age, comprising hand-built vessels in a hard fabric. There is no material that can be clearly assigned to the early middle Iron Age or to the late Iron Age or the late pre-Roman Iron Age, so the assemblage would appear to fall within a relatively short period, most probably the 2nd century BC, although the presence of a small number of vessels with lightly burnished surfaces might suggest a continuation into the 1st century BC.

FABRICS

The pottery is generally hard and in good condition. There is an average sherd weight of 15.3g, although this does not allow for joining sherds within two large groups from the fills at the terminals of two internal linear ditches, 863 and 865, which would certainly raise this average.

Given the small size of the assemblage, a full quantitative analysis by fabric types has not been undertaken, but the following general observations can be made. Most of the material has no immediately obvious mineral inclusions, but the presence of sparse small quartz grains, typically less than 0.5mm, indicates the inclusion of some sand. A few sherds also contain some larger irregular voids from the loss of larger mineral inclusions. A slightly smaller proportion of the material contains small rounded pellets of grog, either as an addition to the sand or as the only evident inclusion. A small proportion of the material, no more than 10%, contains either crushed shell or voids from leached inclusions, probably crushed shell.

The pottery shows a wide range of surface colours. The cores are invariable grey to grey-black while both the inner and outer surfaces vary from orange-brown to light brown and grey to grey black. The surfaces of a few vessels are particularly coarse and uneven, with finger marks still visible, but most vessels have even and smoothed surfaces. Few show signs of any more specific surface treatment, although the lower part of a smaller vessel is black throughout and has been lightly burnished, while a body sherd from the fill of the enclosure ditch, 641, is from a similar vessel.

FORMS AND DECORATION

The majority of the assemblage comprises body sherds, although there are some base sherds, all flat, and only eight rim sherds; four from large storage jars and four from smaller vessels.

The largest single group from the site is a primary deposit containing multiple sherds from a limited number of vessels, from the terminals of two internal ditches, 863 and 865. These two contexts produced 255 sherds, weighing 3560g, 60% of the entire assemblage. This group is dominated by sherds from large, thick-walled storage jars. Some of these are plain, with one example comprising body sherds up to 19mm thick with similarly thick base sherds. However, there are also sherds from storage jars with scored decoration. The body sherds are typically around 9-12mm thick, and come from the straight lower walls of storage jars, with the scoring

roughly near vertical but not executed with any great care or control. Most of the storage jars are of standard forms, and they are broadly comparable to a deposit of plain and scored-ware storage jars from a single pit in a middle Iron Age settlement at Great Houghton (Jackson 2000-01). Within the group from the ditch terminals, a rim from a large open bowl or jar is unusual in having the flattened rim decorated with irregularly spaced, deeply cut transverse incisions, which have dragged the clay outwards to form an irregular lip. The body of this vessel has sparse oblique scoring (Fig 9, 4).

Other contexts also produced smaller quantities of pottery from storage jars, including a massive lug, 35mm thick, from enclosure ditch, 763. A rim from a large thick-walled jar, from ditch, 909, sub-enclosure E2, has a thickened, square section and has been decorated with finger-tip impressions. The fills of pits 636, 643, 661 and 663, also produced body sherds from storage jars, both plain and scored.

Smaller vessels are only sparsely represented and are too fragmentary to allow the forms to be fully described. A high-shoulder bowl, with a flattened rim, from pit 663 has a particularly coarse and uneven surface (Fig 9, 5), and a similarly coarse, rounded bowl comes from a ditch, 757.

DISCUSSION

There are few smaller vessels present in the assemblage, and no finer bowl forms which might have indicated activity in the earlier middle Iron Age, the 4th into the 3rd centuries BC. Scored ware is characteristic of middle Iron Age assemblages from Northamptonshire

and Leicestershire and into the adjacent counties. It also appears to have continued into the late Iron Age, when the scoring may become more regular, but characteristic late Iron Age vessels, such as burnished globular bowls and vessels with curvilinear decoration are absent, with only two small sherds from burnished vessels in black fabrics in the entire assemblage. As a result, it is suggested that the assemblage probably belongs in the 2nd century BC, with perhaps a possibility of a continuation into the early 1st century BC.

The dominance of storage jars indicates that these vessels had been used, probably somewhere nearby, for the storage of produce. Storage jars were also common amongst the pottery from the hillfort at Hunsbury (Jackson pers com), but large quantities are unusual elsewhere, although in a small assemblage the presence of only a small number of large vessels will unbalance the overall quantifications.

The nearby pit groups excavated in 1965, were broadly contemporary in date, but the pottery from these was quite distinct, comprising mainly fine wares, probably largely bowl forms (Jackson *et al* 1969). The pottery from the more extensive excavations to the east in 2000 overlaps in date with the Quinton House School material, but at that site large storage jars were less common, and activity certainly continued into the late Iron Age. This may suggest that there was a gradual eastward drift of settlement, with Roman Duston lying yet further to the east.

Catalogue of illustrated middle Iron Age pottery (Fig 9)

- 4 Open bowl, deeply incised decoration on flattened rim, and sparse scoring on body. Core grey-black,

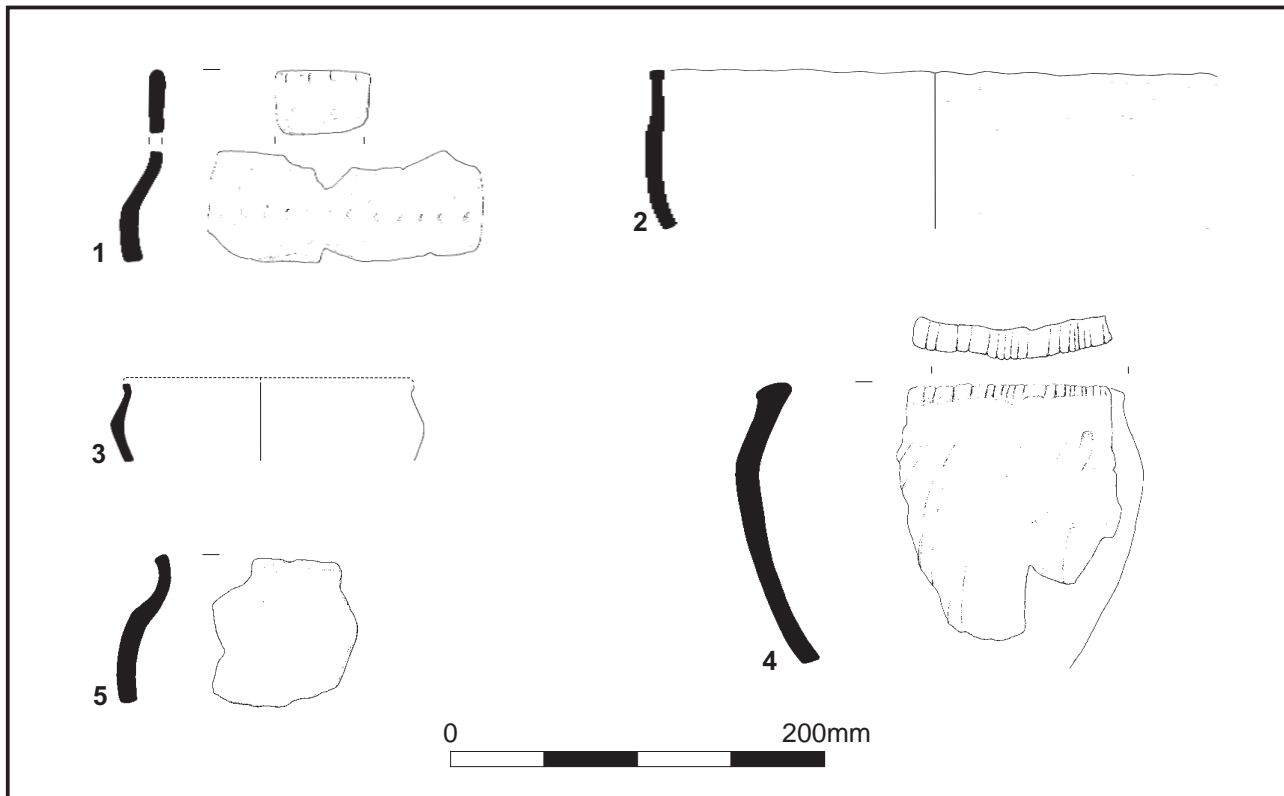


Fig 9 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery (1-3) and middle Iron Age pottery (4-5)



- inside surface uniform light brown, outer surface patchy orange brown to grey-black. Ditch terminal 863
- 5 Shouldered bowl, black throughout with coarse surface. Pit 663

IRON AGE FINDS by Tora Hylton

A splinter of worked bone, 50mm long and 6mm wide, recovered from an Iron Age ditch, appears to be part of a small implement with a pointed and worn terminal shaped by a knife. A similar object from Ashville Trading Estate, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, has been identified as a needle with the eye broken (Parrington 1978, fig 60, 27).

IRON AGE ANIMAL BONE by Karen Deighton

The 26 animal bones from Iron Age contexts that are identifiable to species came from common domesticates; horse, cow, sheep/goat and pig. The remaining five could not be identified. Ageing data is restricted to cattle mandibular molars, which suggest an adult animal.

IRON AGE ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE by Karen Deighton

Eleven soil samples collected from a range of Iron Age features were processed using a siraf tank fitted with a 500micron mesh and flot sieve. The resulting flots were dried and examined with a microscope (10xmagnification). Identifications were made, where possible, with the aid of the author's reference collection, a seed atlas (Schoch *et al* 1988) and the Ohio University online seed identification workshop.

Preservation was exclusively by charring. On the whole fragmentation and abrasion of seeds and grains was at a low level. Charcoal, however, was extremely fragmented and was not submitted for species identification. The six samples listed are those of most interest (Table 2).

Most of the charred seed was concentrated in three pits, 661, 643 and 903, associated with the sub-enclosure E2. Hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) appears to be the dominant cereal type, although spelt (*Triticum spelta*) and naked barley (*Hordeum vulgare var nudum*) are also present. Oat is present in one sample only, pit 643, and it could not be determined if this was wild or domesticated. Pea is also present in one sample, pit 643. Wild/weed species were dominated by fat hen (*Chenopodium album*) and included sheep sorrel (*Rumex acetocella*) and cleavers (*Galium aparine*). All are common crop weeds.

The low frequency of chaff and weeds suggests a late stage in crop processing (ie a crop prepared for storage or consumption) which could influence the interpretation of the status and function of the site. Pits show a higher density of charcoal and seeds than material from ditches. These could represent residue from storage or refuse, the remaining samples representing background. In contrast to previous work at Upton (Deighton 2001) and Pineham (Ciaraldi 2001, Deighton 2007) samples from Iron Age features were reasonably productive, differences could

Table 2: Environmental ecofacts

Feature type	661 pit	643 pit	643 pit	903 pit	893 pit	989 ditch
Sample	1	2	3	4	6	7
Volume (litres)	30	20	10	30	30	20
Emmer/einkorn	-	2	1	-	-	-
Spelt	7	-	2	5	-	-
Spelt glume base	18	-	-	-	-	1
Wheat indet (glume)	-	1	-	-	-	-
Hulled barley	22	13	70	48	-	2
Naked barley	1	-	5	5	1	3
Wheat/barley	96	26	83	87	-	-
Oat	-	3	-	-	-	-
Cereal indet.	52	16	19	23	4	-
Pea	-	1	-	-	-	-
Small pulse	9	-	-	-	-	-
Sheep sorrel	7	1	1	-	-	2
Dock family	2	-	-	2	-	-
Crucifer	1	-	1	-	-	-
Nipplewort	2	-	-	-	-	-
Stinking mayweed	3	-	-	-	-	-
Cleavers	2	-	-	-	-	1
Fat hen	28	7	-	7	5	-
Indet. Weed	12	-	1	-	-	7
Totals	262	72	183	166	12	21

be due to function or preservation. Without more data this issue cannot be resolved. Brief comparisons can be made with Crick where barley is also the dominant cereal type and spelt is present (Monckton *et al* forthcoming). The maximum density at Quinton house is slightly higher, 18.3 per litre, compared with 16 per litre at Crick.

ROMAN ACTIVITY

There are no features of Roman date, but a small quantity of Roman pottery and a single coin was recovered as residual material in medieval and post-medieval contexts and within the subsoil.

ROMAN POTTERY AND OTHER FINDS by Tora Hylton

Fifteen sherds, weighing 244g, are dated to the mid/late 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The pottery comprises undiagnostic body sherds, which display signs of abrasion and wear, suggesting that it had been lying around for some time prior to deposition.

There are locally manufactured coarsewares in shell-gritted, greyware and grog-tempered fabrics; identifiable forms include a small greyware jar with bead rim and a channel-rim dish/bowl in greyware with oxidised surfaces. Finewares include a body sherd from an indented greyware beaker and three sherds of Samian ware, including a base sherd and foot ring from Dragondorff type 18R which dates to the mid/late 1st century (cf Webster 1996, 32). The other Samian sherds are undiagnostic.

A Roman coin was extremely worn, making identif-

ication difficult, but it appears to be a 4th-century issue (Ian Meadows pers comm). On one side a fragment has broken off at the point where the vestiges of two small circular perforations are visible. The perforations are placed 2mm from the outer edge of the coin and 5mm apart and would probably have been used for suspension. Roman coins were often perforated and used for decorative purposes during the Saxon period.

MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT

THE MEDIEVAL BOUNDARIES AND WALLS

MEDIEVAL DITCHES

Two ditch systems on perpendicular alignments probably formed boundaries associated with the deserted medieval village of Upton, which lies largely to the south (Fig 3).

A ditch, 778, aligned north-west to south-east, which had been recut a number of times, was possibly one of the earliest medieval features (Fig 10). A shallow slot, 786, adjacent to the western edge of the ditch and truncated by it to the south, was 0.65m wide and 0.09m deep and was filled with mid brown-grey sandy clay (Fig 11). To the north it was truncated by the hollow-way, walls and a stone-lined pit, but it continued to the north of the stone-lined pit where there was a narrow break or entrance, 0.5m wide.

The main ditch also terminated to the north-west. The last ditch recut was 1.50m wide and 0.85m deep, with a wide V-shaped profile, though with a more shallow edge to the west than the east. The fill of the latest ditch was a homogeneous mid brown sandy clay with charcoal flecks and limestone fragments, suggesting that it may have been deliberately backfilled prior to the construction of overlying stone walls. To the north a further large ditch, 772/991, on the same alignment, also terminated, leaving a causeway 0.80m wide (Figs 10 and 11). Measuring 1.60m wide and 0.65m deep, the northern ditch had a wide U-shaped profile and had been recut at least once. Pottery from these ditches is dated from around the 13th century to the middle of the 15th or 16th centuries.

Several small slots and postholes lay adjacent to the ditch system (Fig 10, 748 and Fig 11, 913). The most substantial of these, 748, was 3.80m long, 0.80m wide and 0.76m deep, with near vertical sides and a gently rounded base that had several depressions in it, suggestive of the bases of postholes (Fig 10). There were also two further slots, 1035 and 1037, adjacent to the hollow-way (Fig 10). These features may be the remains of a fence situated alongside both the ditch and the hollow-way.

To the west there was a ditch system on a perpendicular alignment, north-east to south-west. Earlier cuts in the sequence lay to the north-west, indicating a general drift of the boundary over time towards the south-east. The earliest ditch had a narrow U-shaped profile and was 0.83m deep. The latest ditch, 954, was 1.80m wide and 0.60m deep, with a wide V-shaped profile (Fig 10). The fills of all the ditches consisted of grey-brown and orange-brown sandy clay. The latest ditch, which abutted the southern wall, 964, contained stones which appeared to have slumped in from the wall. To the north-east a

further sequence of ditches, 993 and 774, appeared to form a continuation of the boundary, albeit on a slightly different alignment (Fig 10). These ditches appeared to truncate the north-west to south-east boundary system, although pottery from the ditches has a similar date range, extending up to the mid 15th or 16th centuries.

A little to the east of these ditch systems there was a narrow gully, 782, aligned north-south, which was undated (Fig 10).

MEDIEVAL WALLS AND A PIT

Overlying the eastern medieval ditch were the remnants of a number of limestone walls. They probably represent activity near the northernmost extent of the deserted medieval village of Upton, the earthwork remains of which begin 120m to the south.

A linear boundary wall, 1002, was aligned north-west to south-east (Figs 10, 11 and 12), and probably replaced the underlying boundary ditches. It was 0.60m wide and survived up to 0.45m high, and a length of 5m survived, truncated to both the north and south. The single foundation course was wider than the standing wall, which was a dry-stone construction of roughly coursed limestone, most with squared face stones, whilst the core utilised smaller rubble. Most of the facing stones were only 20-40mm thick, but occasional larger stones were also incorporated.

An L-shaped length of wall, 1005 and 1010, robbed to both the north and west, was set 1.23m west of the boundary wall, creating a narrow passageway between them where there were slight remains of a metal surface (Fig 11). The 3.5m length of the eastern wall, 1005, was 0.80m wide and survived to 0.60m high (Figs 10, 11 and 12). Its construction was similar to the boundary wall, but the facing limestone blocks were generally larger. The southern arm of the wall, 1010, was of a slighter build at 0.35-0.45m wide, and only a single course survived. This L-shaped length of wall may have been the corner of a building that was largely lost, with the walls surviving only where they stood over earlier ditches.

In the angle of the walls there was a sub-rectangular stone-lined pit, 2.10m long, 1.40m wide by 0.80m deep (Figs 11 and 12). It was cut into the natural clay, with the top 0.60m lined with dry-stone rubble laid in rough courses (Fig 13). The fill consisted of medium grey-brown sandy clay, which contained a few sherds of Potterspury ware, dating up to the end of the 15th century, and a metal strap-end dating to the 14th or 15th centuries.

To the south-west a further length of limestone wall, 964, aligned south-west to north-east, was 0.60m wide by 0.30m high (Fig 10). It was of a similar construction to the other walls and sat on the southern edge of the ditch system, probably replacing these ditches.

THE HOLLOW-WAY

A hollow-way ran along the southern side of the ditch system aligned north-east to south-west, and lay adjacent to wall 964, and terminated to the east over the eastern boundary ditches (Figs 10 and 11).

It was c4.25m wide to the south-west but narrowed to 1.8m wide to the east, where it lay adjacent to wall, 1010. The narrower length was at least 6.0m long, and this may

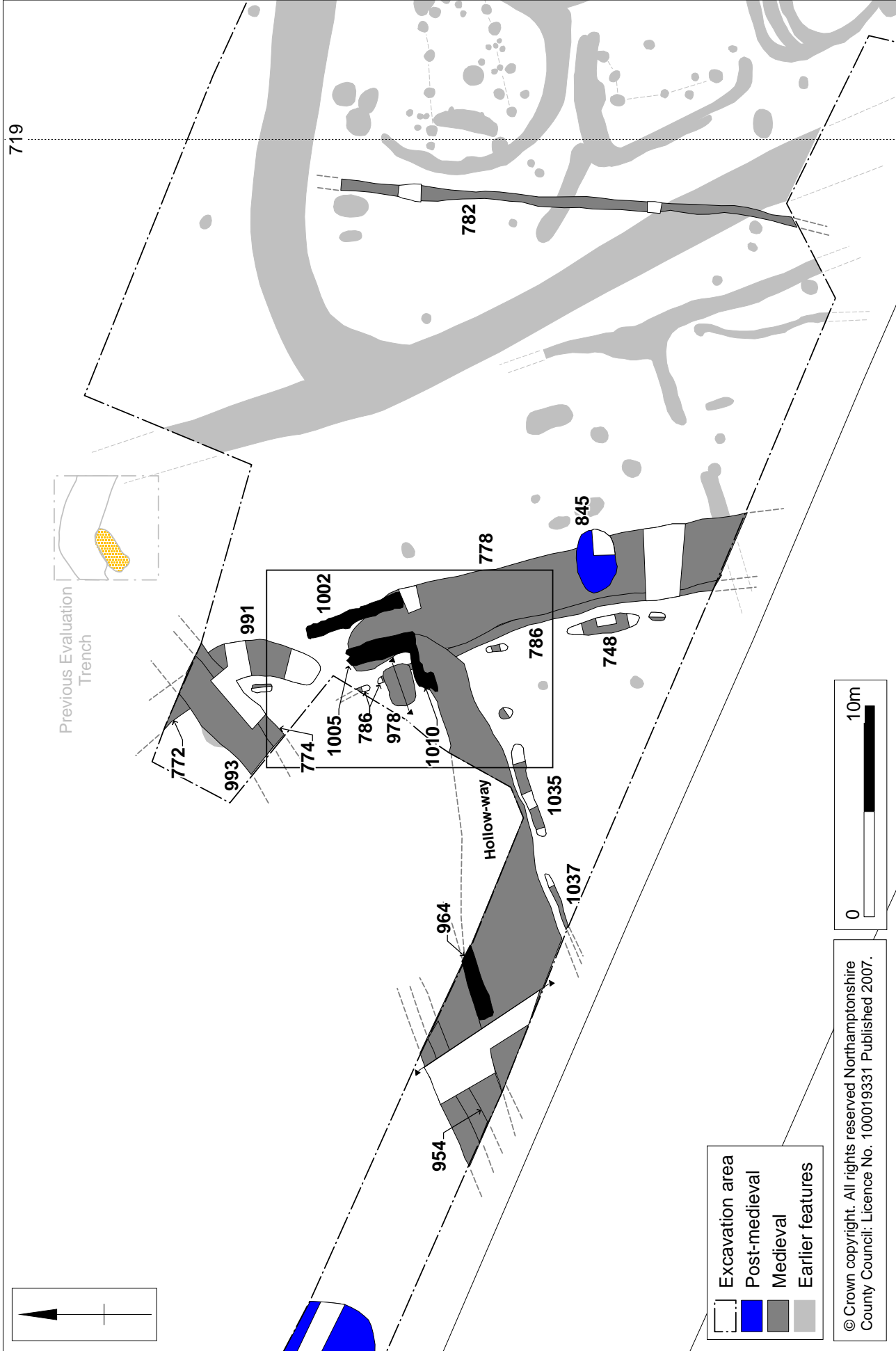


Fig 10 Medieval and post-medieval features

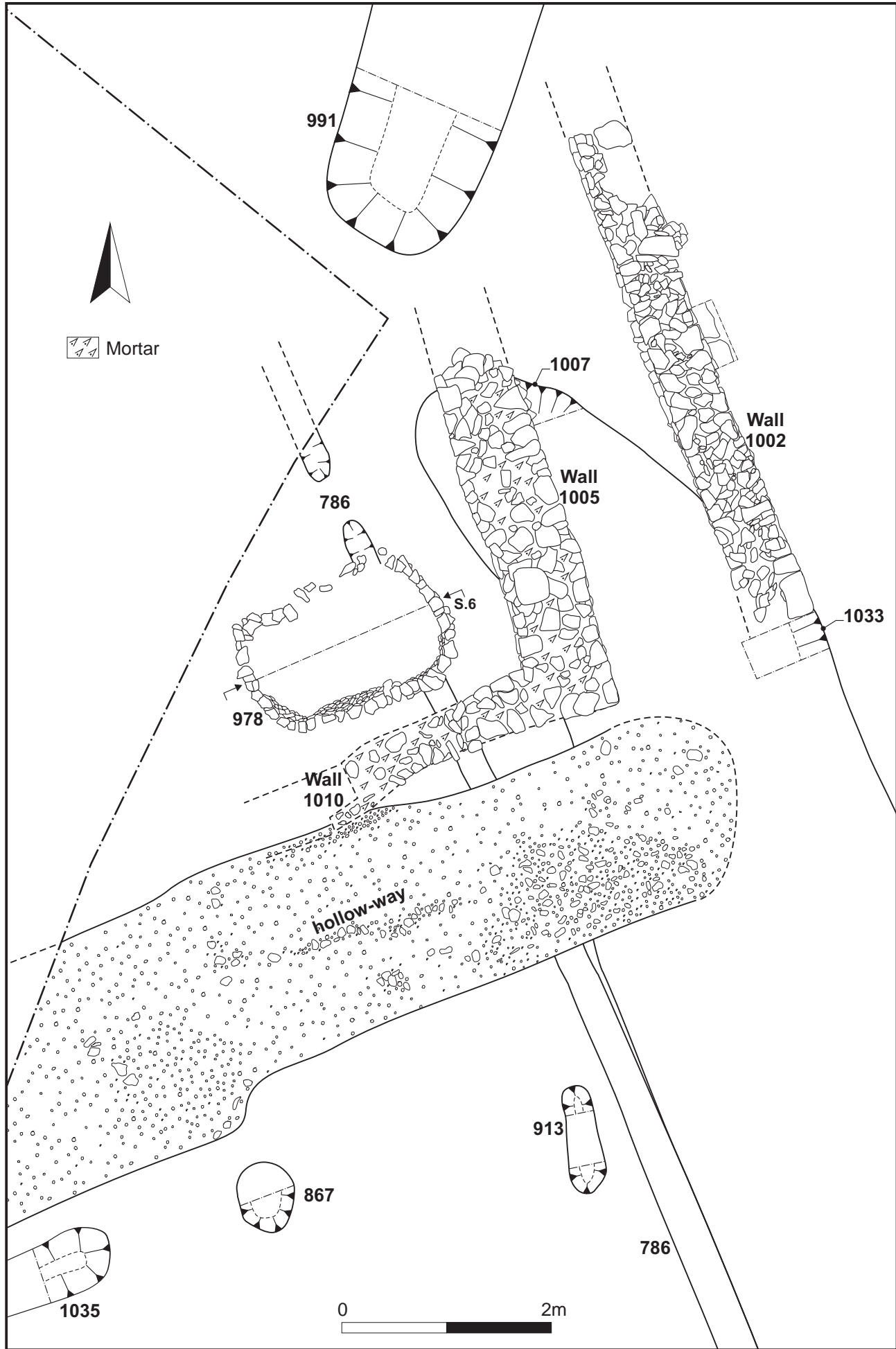


Fig 11 The medieval walls and stone-lined pit, with adjacent hollow-way



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Fig 12 Medieval wall, 1002, building 1005/1010 and stone-lined pit, 978, looking north-east



Fig 13 Stone-lined pit, 978, looking south-west

also provide a minimum length for the adjacent building. The road surface comprised compacted small limestone pebbles and had a slight camber (Figs 10 and 11). In the surface there were surviving wheel ruts, 1.40m apart, and repairs to the surface probably indicate that it was in use for a substantial period of time.

POST-MEDIEVAL FEATURES

A large oval pit, 845, was cut into the fills of the medieval ditch (Fig 10). The pit fills consisted of friable dark, grey-brown silty clays with limestone pieces, pottery, dated to the 18th century, sherds of flat roof tile and moderate quantities of animal bone.

At the western end of the site, a series of quarry pits had been cut into the natural sand. Two of the shallower pits, 1018 and 1026, were about 0.90m deep with steep to vertical sides (Fig 4). Their fills consisted of loose dark brown loam mixed with redeposited sand and limestone fragments. Tile fragments were recovered from pit, 1018, as well as a copper alloy buckle and bottle glass and clay tobacco-pipe bowls, ranging in date from the 16th to 18th centuries.

MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY

by *Iain Soden*

A total of 106 sherds, weighing 1.452kg, was recovered. In date they range from the Saxo-Norman period to the 18th or 19th centuries. The numbers recovered are not indicative of intense occupation at any period and the site may have been marginal to settlement throughout.

The sherds were counted and weighed according to fabric and context and as closely as possible assigned to the County Type Series (CTS) as set out in the Ceramic Type Series for Northamptonshire (Blinkhorn, unpublished manual) (Table 3).

None of the types is new to the county or to the immediate area, having been found on a variety of Northampton sites previously. The occurrence suggests two peaks of occupation (if such small numbers can ever be described as peaks). The first is in the 13th century, the second in the 18th century. In between, there is a very low level of

Table 3: Medieval and post-medieval pottery fabrics by occurrence

Common name	CTS Code	Sherds / Weight	Approx date
St Neots-type	100/200	17 / 168g	c1000-1200
Potterspur	329	14 / 242g	c1250-1500
Lyveden-Stanion B	319	2 / 29g	c1350-1500
Shelly coarseware	330	27 / 381g	c1200-1400
Late medieval redware	380	5 / 27g	c1450-1550
Late medieval greyware	401	1 / 14g	c1450-1550
Red earthenware	407	3 / 17g	c1500-1600
Midland Purple	403	2 / 31g	c1400-1600
Midland Black	411	19 / 445g	c1580-1800
Manganese-glazed	413	4 / 43g	c1690-1740
Tin-glazed earthenware	410	10 / 44g	c1650-1750
Nottinghamshire stoneware	417	2 / 11g	c1700-1800

deposition, suggesting either that this site was marginal to settlement or that refuse was taken elsewhere, possibly middened for manuring the fields. None of the material before the 18th century is of anything other than of a rural and simple character. No table-wares are present until the last period.

MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL FINDS

by *Tora Hylton and Anne Ford-Colby*

MEDIEVAL FINDS

The only find dated to the medieval period is a two-piece strap-end manufactured from copper alloy sheet, from the base of the fill of the medieval stone-lined pit, 978. It comprises two slightly tapered sub-rectangular plates, 45mm long by 14mm wide, secured by two rivets centrally placed at each end. The attachment edge is furnished with six notches, rather like an example from London (Pritchard 1991, fig 104, 769). Part of the leather strap still survives between the plates. Such strap-ends generally date from the 14th and 15th centuries.

POST-MEDIEVAL FINDS

The copper alloy buckle from quarry 1018, has a figure-of-eight or 'spectacle' shaped frame, the central bar protrudes beyond the sides of the frame and there are two small integral lobes at each end (cf Zeepvat 1992, fig 53, 39). The remains of a black coating is visible in places, this is a common feature on dress accessories during the 15th and 16th centuries. Egan has suggested that such items may have been coated in linseed oil, to give a reddish translucent colour (2005a, 348-49).

Finds from the subsoil include two fruit tree labels. Two right-hand halves of separate cast iron fruit tree identity labels are the top part of the markers. The lower parts have broken off, but would have been stuck into the ground by the fruit trees. The lettering on one marker is probably Ribston Pippin, a variety of dessert apple discovered at Ribston Hall, Yorkshire and thought to date from 1688. It is believed to be the parent of the popular apple variety, Cox's Orange Pippin (see websites: www.keepers-nursery.co.uk/warners_king_variety.aspx and www.parkfruitfarm.co.uk). The variety on the other half marker has not been identified. It is likely that these apple trees were grown in the walled vegetable garden, as the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows an orchard situated here. The evaluation in 2006 (Butler & Foard-Colby) produced a similar apple identity marker.

An iron stake recovered from the subsoil is the lower part of a fruit tree label. Stuck into the ground by the tree it was angled so that the identity label could be clearly seen.

Other post-medieval finds include two lead shot balls, 13mm in diameter probably used with pistols, and two buttons. The buttons comprise half of a hollow, two-piece lead/tin button similar to an example from a late 17th-century deposit in London (Egan 2005b, fig 33, 204), and a flat circular plate with loop attached to the underside and decorated with a marginally placed, triple zigzag motif, which is probably of 18th-century date.



MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL CERAMIC
BUILDING MATERIAL
by Pat Chapman

This is a small assemblage of 39 flat roof tile sherds, one with a remnant nib. The majority come from the oval pit, 845, with a few from quarry pit, 1018. They are between 15mm to 18mm thick. The predominant fabric is hard, fine orange-brown. The remaining fabrics are sandier and orange, red or pale silty brown. One small fragment has a maroon wash and another has a black wash on the upper surfaces. These tile fragments could date from the 13th to 19th centuries.

There are also eleven fragments of brick from pit 845. They are all handmade and poorly mixed. One fragment is 66mm thick (2.5/8 inches), is 45mm thick (1¾ inches). These could date from the 15th to early 19th centuries.

THE MEDIEVAL ANIMAL BONE
by Karen Deighton

The 14 animal bones identifiable to species came from common domesticates; horse, cow, and sheep/goat. The remaining two could not be identified. Tooth wear on horse molars suggests an elderly animal.

THE MEDIEVAL ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE
by Karen Deighton

Three samples were collected from medieval features. There is a low concentration of cereal grains and seeds, and with such a small amount of material recovered it is difficult to state if the absence of chaff is real or apparent, or to comment on the proportions of weeds to cereal grains.

DISCUSSION

The excavation at Quinton House has extended the known extent of the Iron Age settlement that had been excavated previously on land to the east of the school (Walker and Maull this volume). In addition, some further evidence for late Bronze Age/early Iron Age activity was recovered, and the continuation of a pit alignment was also confirmed. There were also features dated to the medieval period and related to Upton deserted medieval village.

The earliest features were three postholes or small pits, which are broadly contemporary with similar small pits to the east, which have been radiocarbon dated to the 8th century BC (Walker and Maull this volume). The pits found on both sites may form part of a single open settlement or they could represent repeated, perhaps seasonal episodes of temporary occupation within a more migratory life style.

Only a single truncated pit from the pit alignment was exposed during the excavation, with two further examples exposed during the evaluation. They therefore add little to the discussion, beyond confirming the westward continuation of the alignment. These pits appeared to be more irregular than those seen to the east, but this may have been the result of weathering of the softer sand into which the pits were cut in this area.

Pit alignments are a regional phenomenon and are thought to have functioned as territorial boundaries. The repeated scouring, or cleaning out, of the pits may have been a method of reinforcing the boundary. A single sherd of Iron Age pottery was recovered from one of the pits, but to the east there was a considerable pottery assemblage and charcoal from the upper fill of one pit was dated to the 4th-3rd centuries BC, indicating that at least part of the pit alignment was still a landscape feature in the middle Iron Age.

The D-shaped enclosure has been dated to the middle Iron Age, and it appears to have been located alongside a linear boundary ditch in a similar fashion to a series of contemporary enclosures to the east. The interior contained a dense palimpsest of internal divisions that cannot be fully interpreted, but which indicate intensive usage. There may have been a single roundhouse set within a C-shaped ring ditch. There was no concentration of finds within the terminals of this ring ditch, as is usually the case, but there was a large assemblage of pottery from the terminals of two linear ditches a little to the east, and a number of the pits to the north-east of the putative house location also produced find assemblages and quantities of charred seed, indicating that the northern end of the enclosure had been the focal area for domestic activity.

The southern half of the enclosure was sub-divided into several small areas, which would have been employed for different purposes, such as storage, animal pens or as working areas. The small pens within the enclosure could have only been used to keep young animals or to pen a single animal such as a pig.

No late Iron Age pottery was recovered from the site, and there was only a little residual Roman pottery and no contemporary features, suggesting that settlement had contracted to the east in the later Iron Age.

The medieval remains included re-cut boundary ditches and later limestone walls, a stone-lined pit and a metallised surface; although the paucity of finds indicates that they were not in the immediate vicinity of a major domestic focus. They do, however, show that medieval ditched plot boundaries extended somewhat north of the recorded earthworks, as the excavated examples are on similar alignments to the boundaries to the south. This may indicate that the church had stood at one end of a single elongated village, comprising crofts set on either side of a central road.

The quarry pits at the west end of the site were for the extraction of sand, possibly connected with the reconstruction of the hall in the early 18th century. A large quarry situated on the north side of the A45, opposite the site, is marked on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, showing that the process of sand extraction has continued over a considerable time period.

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