



University of
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Archaeological Services



**An Archaeological Evaluation
on land south of Goulsbra Road,
Rushden, Northamptonshire.**

NGR: SP 96609 65546

Gavin Speed

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SP 96609 65546

Gavin Speed

For: RSK Environment Ltd

Approved by:

Signed



Date: 16/01/2012

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An Archaeological Evaluation on land south of Goulsbra Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire.

Gavin Speed

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land to the south of Rushden, Northamptonshire (SP 96609 65546) on behalf of RSK Environment Ltd. The work was undertaken to inform a planning application for proposed residential development south of Rushden, Northamptonshire.

No archaeological deposits were identified other than an extant recent field boundary ditch,. A small number of Roman pottery sherds were found residually.

The site archive will be held by ULAS, accession no. ULAS_RUSHDEN2012, until a recipient organization for Northamptonshire has been established.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for RSK Environment Ltd in January 2012 on land to the south of Rushden, Northamptonshire (SP 96609 65546). The work was undertaken to inform a planning application for proposed residential development (Figure 7) south of Rushden, Northamptonshire.

The Historic Environment Record indicates a number of sites in the vicinity of the proposed development. A geophysical survey was undertaken by RSK in October 2011 (Gorman 2011), and the survey identified a number of geophysical anomalies which were thought to be of archaeological origin. An archaeological evaluation of the site by trial trenching was requested (NCC 2011, ULAS 2011) to assess the presence and significance of the potential features.

This report presents the results of the trial trenching, with an assessment of the potential impact on buried archaeological remains from groundworks associated with future development.

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site lies to the south of Rushden, in a single field to the south of Goulsbra Road. The site is bounded to the north by housing, to the east by the A6, and to the west by a public footpath and Rushden Rugby Club ground (Figure 1). The site is fairly level at around 80m above O.D., though there is a slight slope down from north-east to south-west in the southern part of the site down to 76m above O.D. The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain shows that the underlying geology is mainly glacial drift (boulder clay).

3. Archaeological Background

Previous archaeological investigations in the area have located evidence for Iron Age and Roman settlement activity. There are middle Iron Age enclosures just to the north of the site, and cropmarks on the other side of the A6 recorded on aerial photographs (NCC 2011). Two and a half kilometres to the north of the site, work in advance of the A6 bypass recorded an Iron Age settlement and 1st to 2nd century AD Roman enclosures (Mudd 2004). Iron Age enclosure settlements had also been excavated 2.3km to the north-east at Boundary Avenue (Woods and Hastings 1984). Slightly further afield (3.5km to the north) is the Roman roadside settlement at Higham Ferrers (Lawrence and Smith 2009), and 4.3km to the west lies the Roman 'small town' of Irchester (Burnham and Wachter 1990, 142).

A geophysical survey was undertaken by RSK in October 2011 (Gorman 2011), and the survey identified a number of geophysical anomalies which were thought to be of potential archaeological origin (Gorman 2011, 7).

4. Aims and Objectives

The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation were:

- To identify possible areas of archaeological potential liable to be threatened by the proposed development.
- To establish the location, extent, date, and significance of any archaeological deposits located.
- To define the quality and state of preservation of these deposits.
- To assess the local, regional and national importance of any deposits.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The objective was to gain an indication of the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which may be present in order that an informed planning decision can be taken.

5. Methodology

Prior to any machining of trial trenches, general photographs of the site areas were taken. The trenches were excavated using a JCB mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and overlying layers were removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or the natural undisturbed substratum was reached. Trenches were examined for archaeological deposits or finds by hand cleaning. The trenches were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and then were backfilled and leveled at the end of the evaluation.

The work followed the approved design specification (ULAS 2011) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2009).

6. Results

Twelve trenches were excavated, and were spread across the development site and placed to target geophysical anomalies within the area of the proposed development (Figure 2). The topsoil, consisting of a dark grey-brown ploughsoil, was generally c.0.25m in depth. Below

this was a brown clay subsoil observed in some trenches, ranging in thickness from 0.05m to 0.43m.

TRENCH	LENGTH (metres)	ORIENTATION	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH (min-max metres)	LEVEL OF ARCHAEOLOGY / BASE OF TRENCH (metres above. O.D)
1	30.5	E-W	No archaeological finds or deposits	0.48-0.66	77.17-78.08
2	31	E-W	No archaeological finds or deposits. Gravelly natural at west-end corresponds with geophysical anomaly	0.5-0.83	79.02-79.53
3	29.5	NW-SE	No archaeological finds or deposits. Change in natural corresponds with geophysical anomaly	0.45-0.6	80.29-81.02
4	30	NE-SW	No archaeological finds or deposits. Change in natural corresponds with geophysical anomaly	0.48-0.58	79.83-80.53
5	30	E-W	Field boundary ditch [2]. 0.8m wide and steep-sided, it was 0.57m deep with a concave base. It contained a brown-grey silt-clay (1), within this pottery and animal bone.	0.37-0.44	79.25-80.39
6	30	E-W	No archaeological finds or deposits	0.32-0.53	80.63-81.39
7	30	NE-SW	No archaeological finds or deposits. Change in natural corresponds with geophysical anomaly	0.35-0.55	79.77-80.81
8	15	NE-SW	No archaeological finds or deposits. Change in natural corresponds with geophysical anomaly	0.47-0.6	79.43-79.26
9	15	SE-NW	No archaeological finds or deposits. Slight trace of furrows orientated NE-SW, as indicated by geophysical survey	0.44-0.58	79.06-78.94
10	20	ESE-WNW	No archaeological finds or deposits. Land drains in west-end these confirm the geophysical anomaly	0.56-0.66	78.32-78.20
11	15	NW-SE	No archaeological finds or deposits, land drains orientated NE-SW	0.4-0.5	77.65-77.94
12	15	NW-SE	No archaeological finds or deposits. Land drains orientated NW-SE confirm the geophysical anomaly	0.75-0.95	76.38-76.08

The only trench to contain an archaeological feature was Trench 5 (Figures 4-6), within which was a post-medieval ditch. This was recorded as a field boundary on the 1886 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (see Figure 6). It existed into the early 20th century, but was removed by the time of OS map of 1976. Within the ditch were three sherds of Roman pottery, one dated to the late 1st to mid 2nd century, found on the surface within the interface with the subsoil. Five small fragments of animal bone were also recovered. Unstratified finds from the topsoil include a single sherd of late 1st or early 2nd century Roman pottery, and a fragment of animal bone (see Appendix II for further detail).

7. Conclusion

The evaluation revealed a single ditch in one trench (Trench 5). This corresponds to a field boundary recorded on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map (figure 6). The remaining trenches contained no significant archaeological evidence, apart from furrows (Trench 9), and land drains (Trenches 10, 11, and 12).

Four residual sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the evaluation. This hints at evidence of Roman settlement or activity in the area. Indeed, Roman field enclosures are known 2.5km to the north (Mudd 2004), while 3.5km to the north lies a small Roman roadside settlement at Higham Ferrers (Lawrence and Smith 2009), and the Roman 'small town' of Irchester (Burnham and Wachter 1990: 142) lies 4.3km to the west. The finds discovered here may relate to the outer fringes of these, or other as yet unlocated, settlements.

8. Archive

The site archive will be held by ULAS under accession number ULAS_RUSHDEN0112 until an appropriate recipient organisation is established for Northamptonshire.

The archive contains:

- 12 trench recording sheets
- 1 context summary record
- 1 context sheets
- 1 photographic recording sheet
- Drawing Index sheet
- CD containing digital photographs and report
- Survey data
- Unbound copy of this report
- Thumbnail print of digital photographs
- 33mm black and white contact sheet and negatives

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York, under ID: universi1-117058. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

ID	OASIS entry summary
Project Name	Land to the south of Goulsbra Road, Rushton Northamptonshire
Summary	University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land to the south of Rushden, Northamptonshire (SP 96609 65546) on behalf of RSK Environment Ltd. The work was undertaken to inform a planning application for proposed residential development south of Rushden, Northamptonshire. The evaluation revealed an extant field boundary ditch, no other archaeological deposits were identified. A small number of Roman pottery sherds were found residually.
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Gavin Speed
Previous/Future work	Previous: geophysics / Future: unlikely
Current Land Use	Field
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-application
Site Co ordinates	SP 96609 65546
Start/end dates of field work	05/01/2012-09/01/2012
Archive Recipient	To be arranged
Study Area	4.6ha
Associated project reference codes	Project ID: ULAS_RUSHDEN2012 OASIS form ID: universi1-117058

9. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Northamptonshire Archaeology* in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

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11. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork undertaken for RSK Environment Ltd and was carried out by Gavin Speed and Matthew Morris. Thanks to Owen Raybould and Helena Kelly of RSK Environment Ltd. The finds were analysed by Elizabeth Johnson of ULAS. Dr Patrick Clay managed the project. Liz Mordue (Assistant Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council) monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority.

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Appendix I: Figures

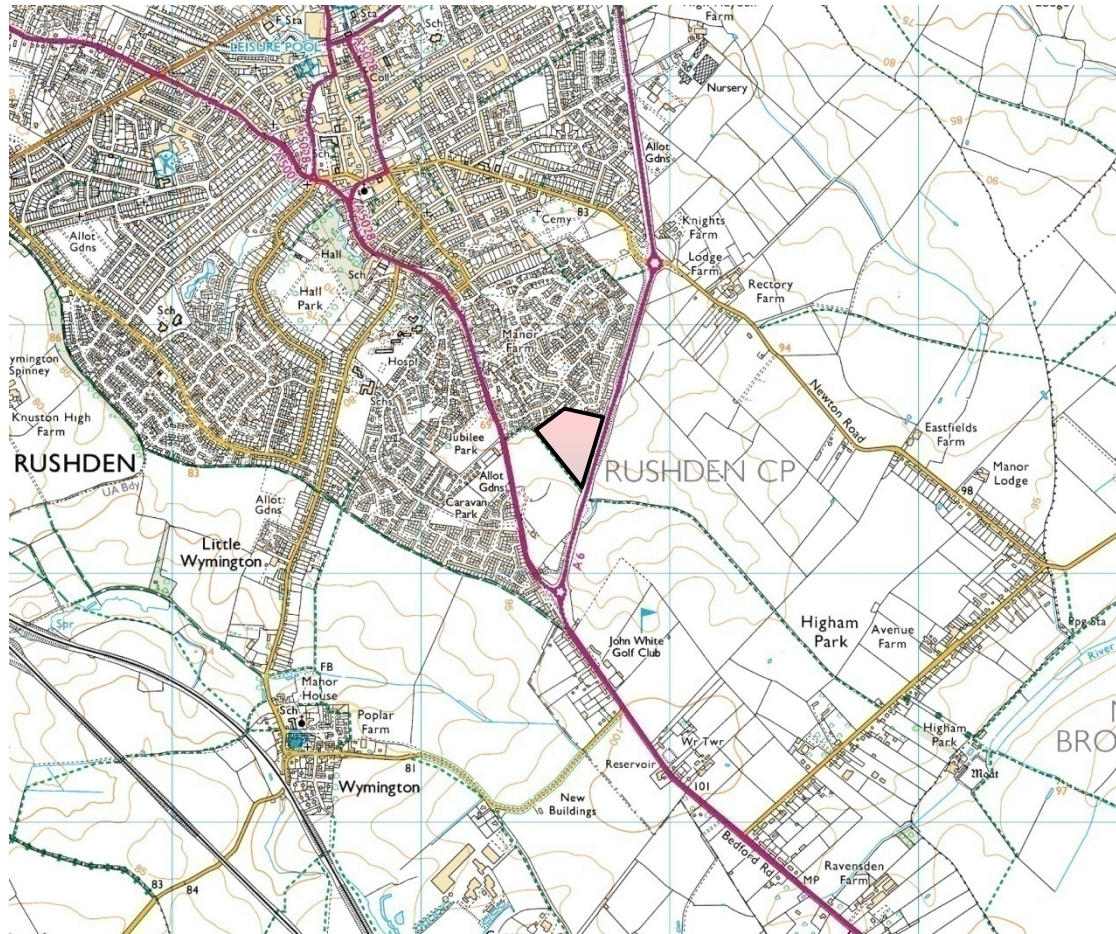


Figure 1: Site location (shaded)

Reproduced from the Explorer 233 Leicester & Hinckley area 1:25 000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2005. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495

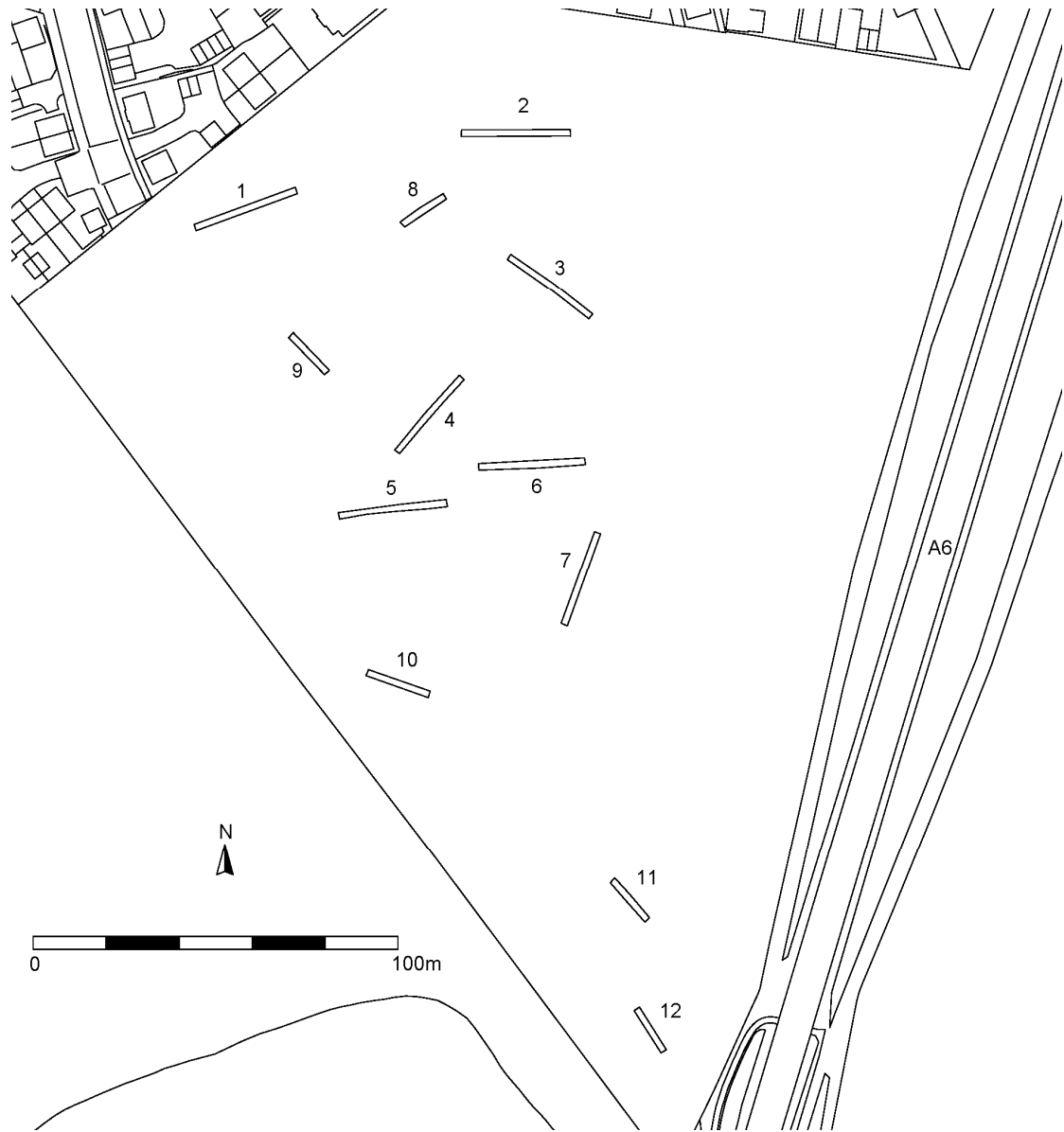


Figure 2: Trench plan

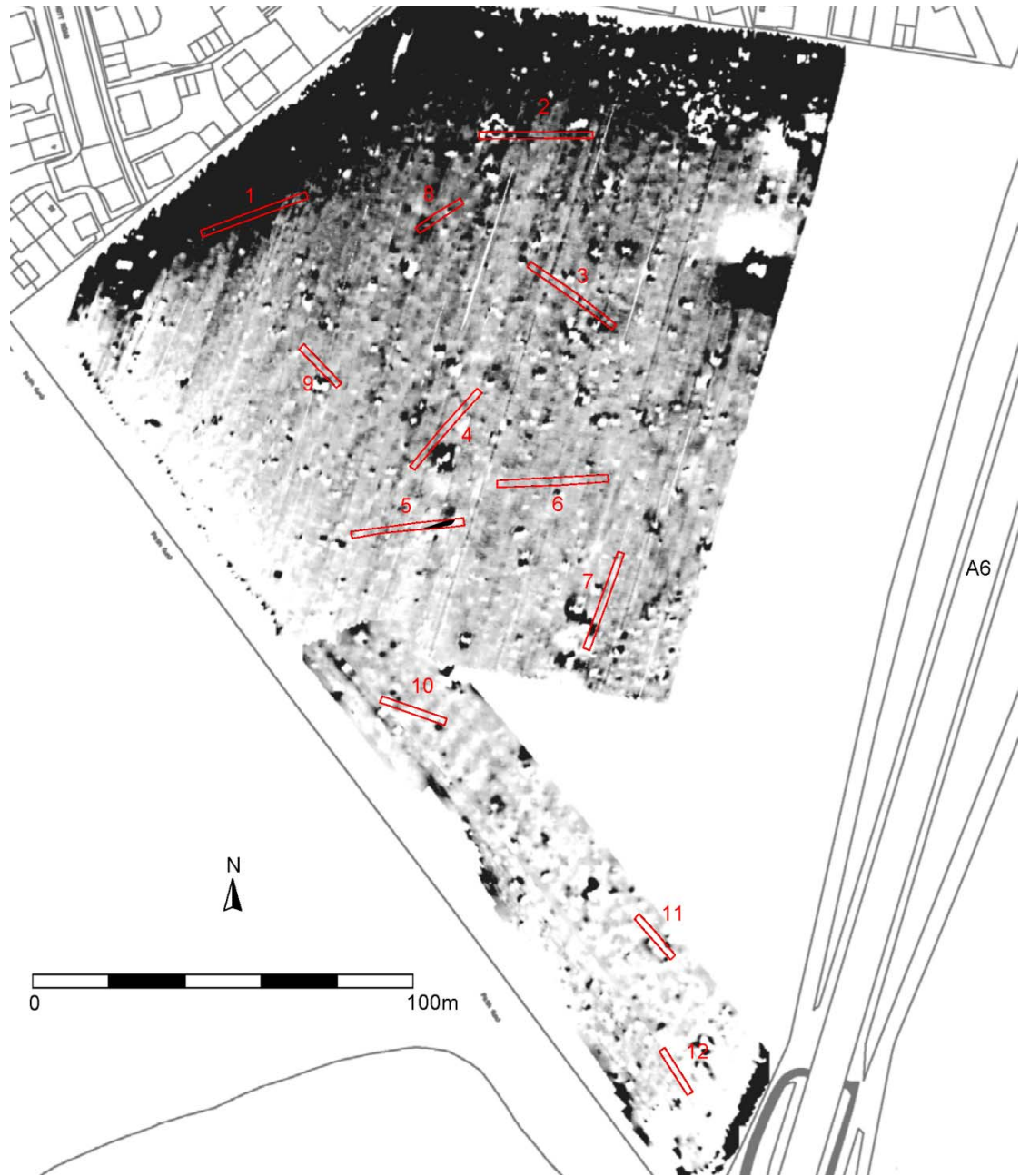


Figure 3: Trench plan with geophysical survey magnetic data plot

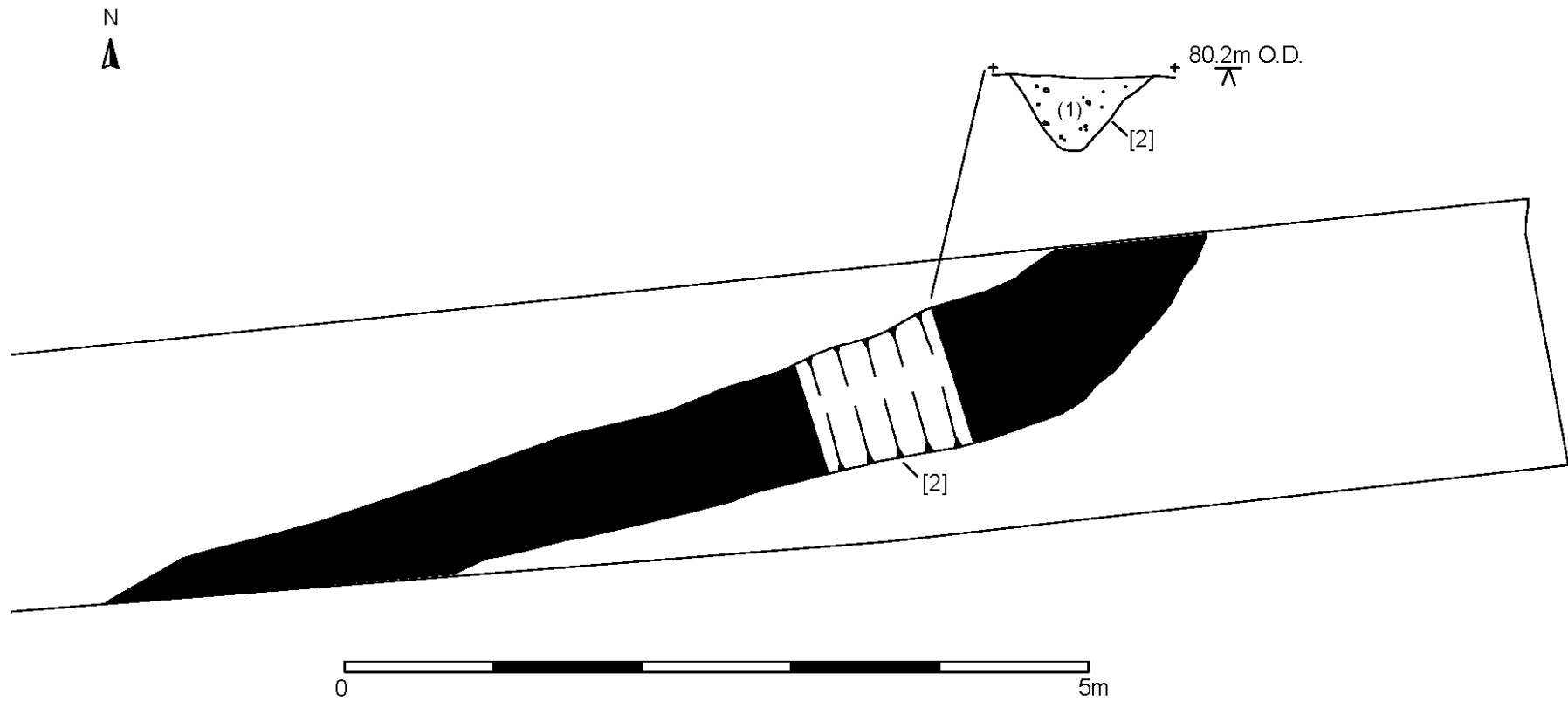


Figure 4: Plan and section of feature in Trench 5



Figure 5: View of feature within Trench 5

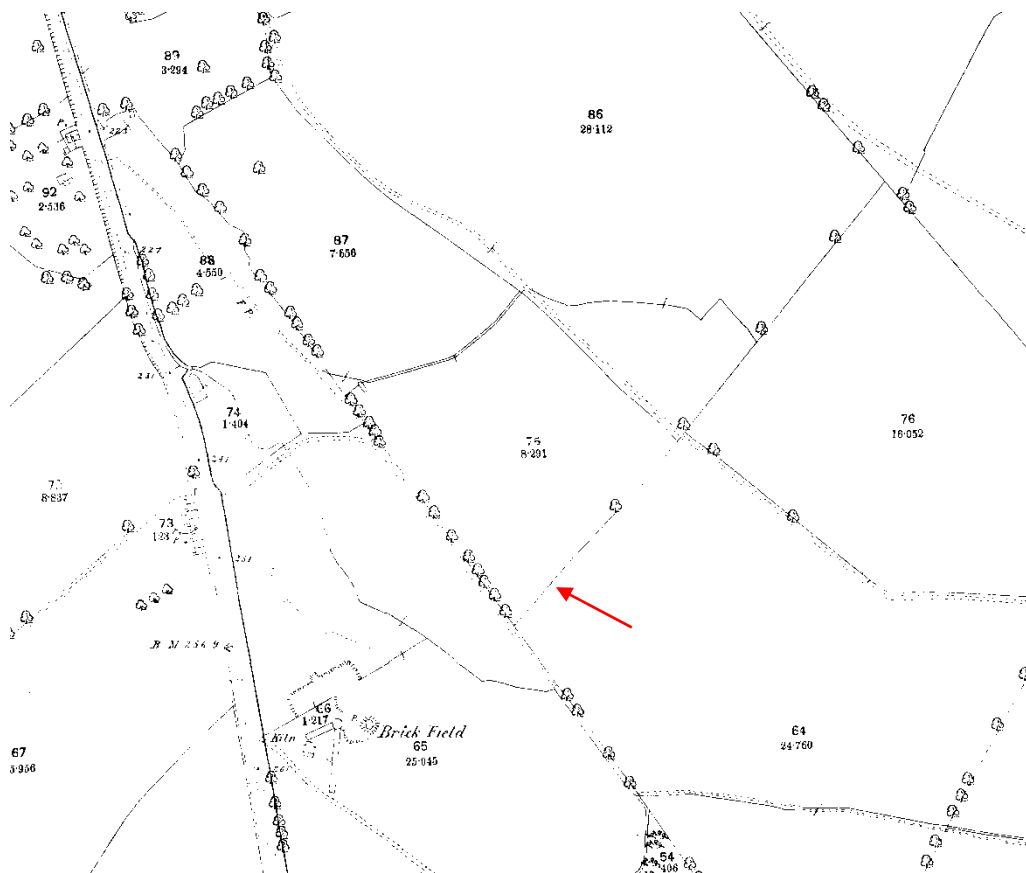


Figure 6: Detail of the 1885 Ordnance Survey map (county series 1:2500), showing the location of trench 5 overlying an earlier field boundary



Figure 7: Plan of proposed development (provided by client)

Appendix II: The Finds

The pottery, four sherds, weighing 25 grams, was catalogued with reference Timby's Northamptonshire fabric series (Timby 2009). The results are shown below (Table 1)

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Timby, J., 2009 The Roman Pottery pp147-159 in Lawrence S. and Smith, A. *Between Villa and Town. Excavations of a Roman roadside settlement and shrine at Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire.* Oxford: Oxford Archaeology Monograph 7

Table 1: pottery by fabric, sherd numbers and weight (grams) by context.

Context	Fabric/Ware	Nos	Grams	Comments
POTTERY				
(1) [2] Trench 5	BWH GR – Burnt White Grog-Tempered	1	9	Late 1st – mid 2nd century AD.
(1) [2] Trench 5	Shell - Shelly ware	1	5	Not closely datable.
(1) [2] Trench 5	GREY - Grey ware	1	8	?Dish. Not closely datable.
U/S	OXID MIC – Oxidised Micaceous ware	1	3	Bowl or dish rim. Late 1st or 2nd century+
BONE				
(1) [2] Trench 5	Animal Bone	5		
U/S	Animal Bone	1		

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