



**University of
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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation
on Land to the Rear of 11 Doddington Road,
Earl's Barton, Northamptonshire**

**NGR:
SP 85493 63716**



Gavin Speed

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**An Archaeological Evaluation on
Land to the Rear of 11 Doddington Road, Earls Barton,
Northamptonshire**

(SP 85493 63716)

Gavin Speed

For: R. Whyman

Approved by:

Signed



Date: 13/11/2012

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CONTENTS

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Summary	3
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Site Description, Topography and Geology.....	4
3. Archaeological and Historical Background (from the brief)	5
4. Aims and Objectives	5
5. Methodology	5
6. Results.....	6
Archaeological Features.....	8
7. The Finds	13
Pottery by Nicholas J. Cooper	13
The Worked Flint by Lynden Cooper	14
The Animal Bone by Jen Browning.....	14
8. Discussion.....	14
9. Conclusion	14
10. Archive and publication.....	15
11. Bibliography	16
12. Acknowledgements.....	18
Appendix 1: Context details.....	19

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location.....	4
Figure 2: Trench plan.....	7
Figure 3: Detailed plan of Trenches 5 and 6.....	9
Figure 4: Plan and section Features in Trench 5.....	10
Figure 5: View of ditch [2], in Trench 5, 0.5m scale, looking south.....	10
Figure 6: Plan and section and view of gully [5].....	11
Figure 7: Plan and section of gully [9].....	12
Figure 8: Plan and section of ditch [11].....	12

An Archaeological Evaluation on Land to the Rear of 11 Doddington Road, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land to the rear of 11 Doddington Road, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire (SP 85493 63716). The work was undertaken as part of an archaeological impact assessment in advance of a proposed residential development.

There was no evidence for archaeological deposits in the trenches in the northern area of the site. The evaluation did however reveal several features of prehistoric date in the south area of the area. Pottery suggests that these features are mid-Iron Age in date (4th – 2nd century BC) and the evidence suggests that they may indicate a prehistoric settlement, or possibly field systems close to a settlement.

The site archive will be held by ULAS under the Site Code NH_DREB12 until a recipient organization for Northamptonshire has been established.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) for R. Whyman in November 2012 on land to the rear of 11 Doddington Road, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire (SP 85493 63716; Fig. 1). This was undertaken in advance of an application for proposed residential development (Planning application WP/2012/0236).

The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application site lies within an area of archaeological interest. In view of the potential impact of the development upon possible archaeological remains, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012), Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority requested that evaluation by trial trenching be carried out as detailed in their briefs (NCC 2012a, 2012b).

The fieldwork specified was intended to provide further indications of the character and extent of any buried archaeological remains in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains might be assessed. Fieldwork was carried out in November following the Written Scheme of Investigation (ULAS 2012) and involved the machine excavation of six trial trenches within the proposed development area.



Figure 1: Site location

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2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development area comprises the garden of 11 Doddington Road and paddocks to the rear of that property (approximately 0.5 ha in total). It lies in the centre of Earls Barton, north of Doddington Road and south of Churchill Road and is bordered to the east by a public footpath which runs between Doddington Road and Churchill Road, and to the west by the gardens of residential properties fronting on to Churchill Road.

Topographically the site slopes downwards slightly to the west and is at an approximate height of 83m aOD. The geology maps show that the site contains Whitby Formation Mudstone to the north-west and Northampton Sand and Ironstone to the south-east.

3. Archaeological and Historical Background (from the brief)

Earls Barton is a polyfocal village with Saxon antecedents; the village church to the west of the site has a surviving Saxon tower and the castle mound, which is a Scheduled Monument, is thought to have Saxon origins. The site lies on the eastern edge of the historic core of the village.

To the north-east on Mills Close and south-east on Mount Pleasant, archaeological observation during building development recorded features and finds of Iron Age date. In particular, on Mills Close in 1977 several features including ditches, pits and a possible hearth were found in association with pottery of 2nd -1st century BC date. Further to the west, finds and earthworks associated with medieval occupation have also been recorded.

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

The proposed development area comprises approximately 0.5 ha. Six trenches were excavated (5 at 20m x 1.6m, and 1 at 30m x 1.6m), comprising an approximate 4% sample of the area. Trenches were positioned to avoid a number of outbuildings and dumps of material.

Prior to any machining of trial trenches, general photographs of the site areas were taken. Topsoil and overburden was removed carefully in level spits using a mini excavator with a toothless bucket on a back actor, under continuous archaeological supervision. Trenches were excavated down to the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground, whichever was reached first.

All trenches were examined and recorded. Archaeological deposits were sample-excavated by hand and recorded following the WSI (ULAS 2012). All work adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2008).

The trenches were backfilled and levelled at the end of the evaluation.

6. Results

Six trenches were excavated. Trenches 1-3 were located in the north field, and trenches 4-6 in the south field (Fig. 2). Archaeological deposits were found in trenches 5 and 6; the remaining trenches contained no archaeological finds or deposits.

The topsoil was fairly consistent across the site. It was composed of a mid-grey-brown silty-clay loam with occasional small pebbles. The depth varied across the site from 0.1m to 0.4m. Beneath the topsoil was a mid-grey-brown clay subsoil, ranging in thickness from 0.05m to 0.35m. Natural substratum was reached in all trenches. This comprised mudstone and ironstone, and was reached between 0.44 to 1m (see Table 1).

Table 1: Trench details

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH (MIN-MAX metres)
1	N-S	20 x 1.8	Topsoil 0.2-0.3m, subsoil 0.5-0.5m. Thick subsoil, no archaeological finds or deposits. Very wet conditions.	0.91-1.0
2	NW-SE	20 x 1.8	Topsoil 0.15-0.18m, subsoil 0.4-0.47m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.57-0.68
3	N-S	20 x 1.8	Topsoil 0.12-0.22m, subsoil 0.22-0.34m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.44-0.63
4	NW-SE	30 x 1.8	Topsoil 0.18-0.24m, subsoil 0.17-0.43m. No archaeological finds or deposits.	0.54-0.77
5	NE-SW	20 x 1.8	Topsoil 0.28-0.39m, subsoil 0.32-0.44m. A shallow N-S ditch [2], with two E-W ditches [4] & [13] coming off it, uncertain relationship.	0.77-0.89
6	NW-SE	20 x 1.6	Topsoil 0.18-0.25m, subsoil 0.45-0.56m. Three ditches / gullies [5], [9], [11]. Very wet conditions.	0.67-0.8

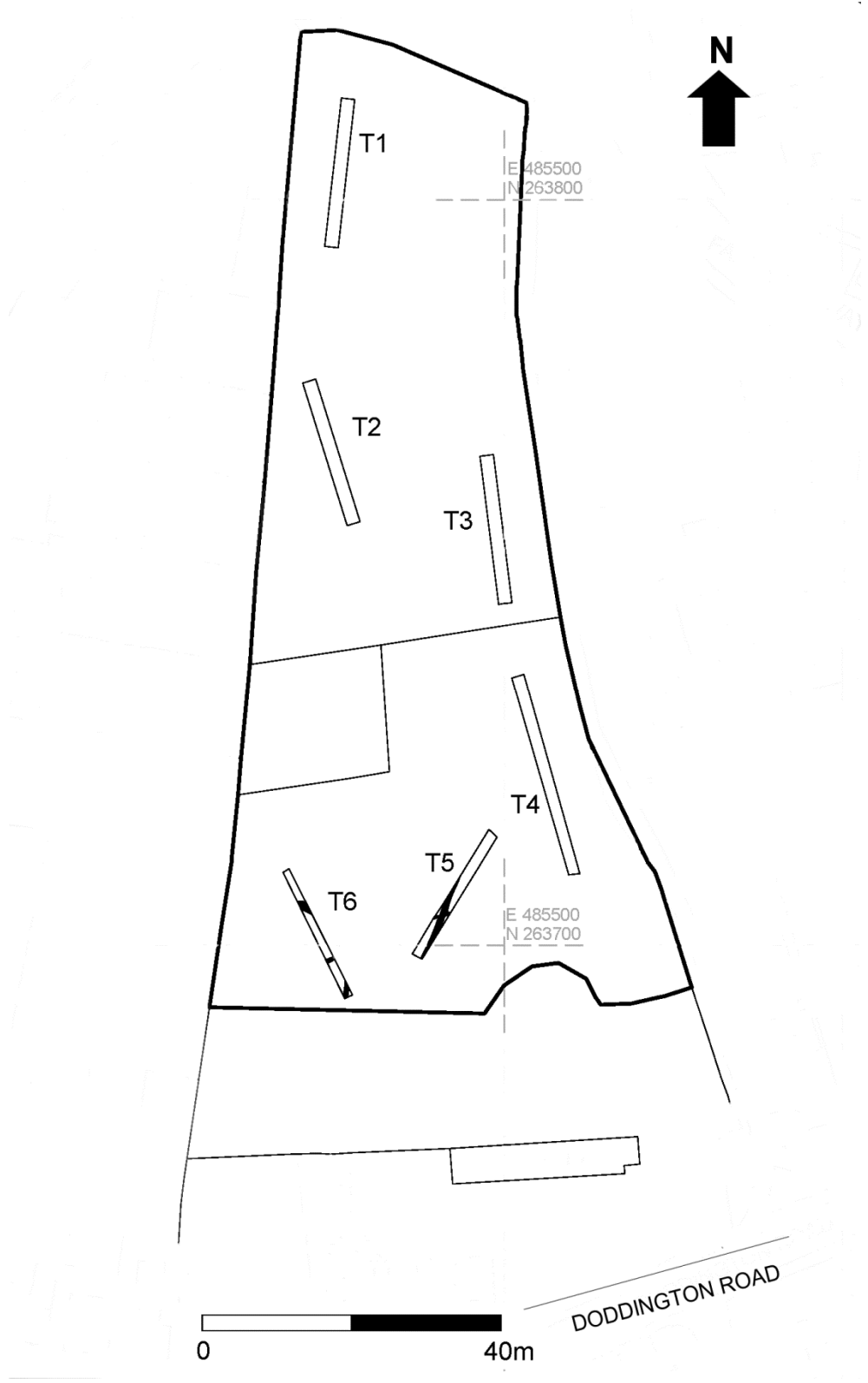


Figure 2: Trench plan

Archaeological Features

Trench 5 (Figs 3- 5) contained a single ditch [2] orientated north to south. The ditch was 12.3m in length, 0.77m wide, and 0.15m deep with a slightly irregular base and sides. It contained a single fill (1) comprising a friable mid brown-grey silt-clay containing crushed ironstone fragments. This contained a single thumbnail scraper probably dating to the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age.

Running east to west across ditch [2] was a small gully [4]. This had slightly sloping sides and a concave base and contained a single deposit of mid-brown-grey silt-clay (3) with no finds. The gully's relationship with ditch [2] is uncertain and it is possible that they are contemporary. To the north of gully [4] was another probable gully [13] also crossing the ditch [2]. Again its relationship with the ditch was not obvious and the gully contained no finds.

Trench 6 (Figs 3, 6- 8) contained three archaeological features; gullies [5] and [9] and ditch [11]. Gully [5] was orientated north-south and measured 2.5m in length, 0.5m wide and 0.17m deep and had concave sides and a flat base. The ditch contained a single deposit of firmly compacted dark grey-black silt-clay (6). Finds from the feature include six sherds of middle Iron Age pottery (early 4th century BC to end of the 2nd century BC), and a single sheep-sized bone fragment and a sheep tooth fragment.

Three and a half metres to the north lay a second gully [9]. This was orientated east-west and measured 1.5m in length, 0.45m wide and 0.08m deep and had concave sides and a flat base. The fill was dark grey-brown silt-clay (10) and contained no finds.

To the north of this (approximately 6.5m) was a ditch [11]. This was orientated north-west to south-east and had straight sides and a central concave base. The single fill was a dark brown-grey silty-clay (12) containing fire-cracked pebbles, and very small charcoal flecks. Thirteen sherds of middle Iron Age pottery (early 4th century BC to end of the 2nd century BC) were recovered from the fill.

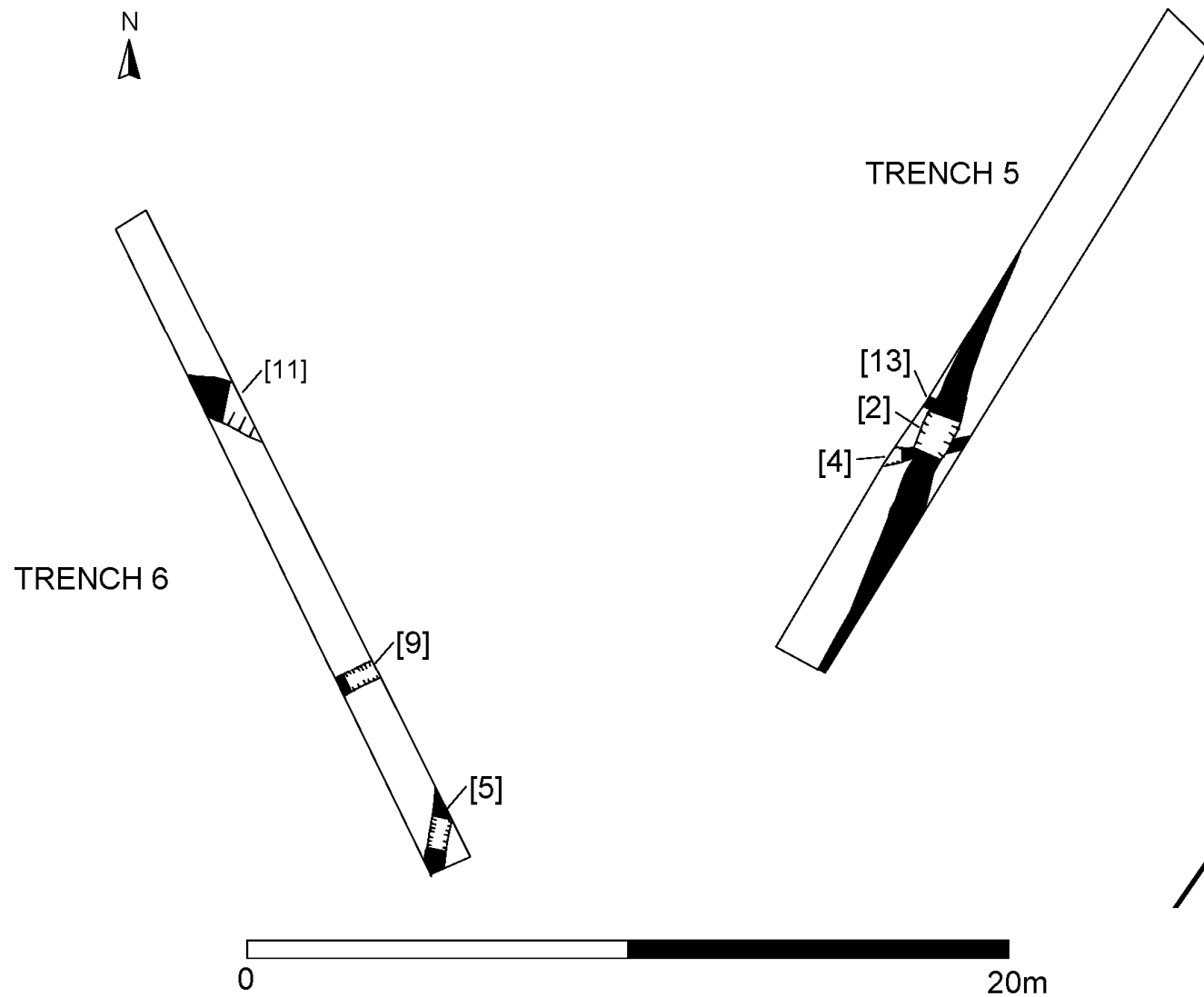


Figure 3: Detailed plan of Trenches 5 and 6

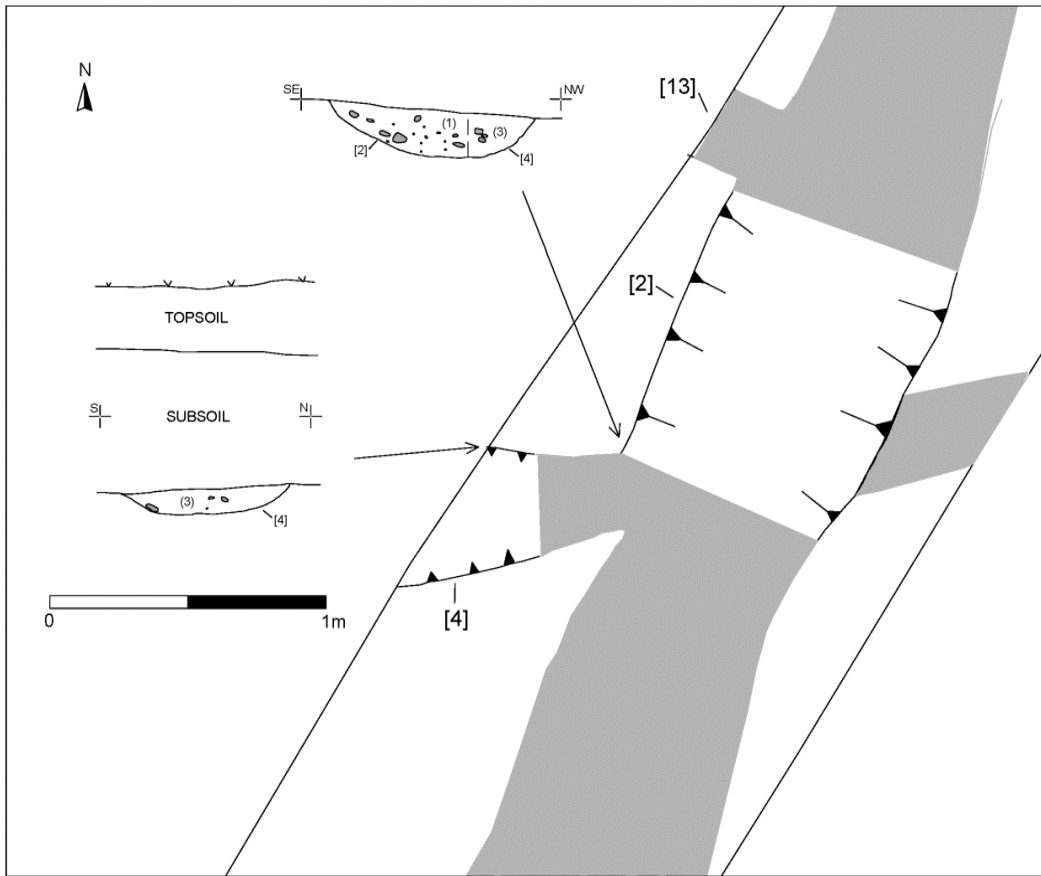


Figure 4: Plan and section Features in Trench 5



Figure 5: View of ditch [2], in Trench 5, 0.5m scale, looking south

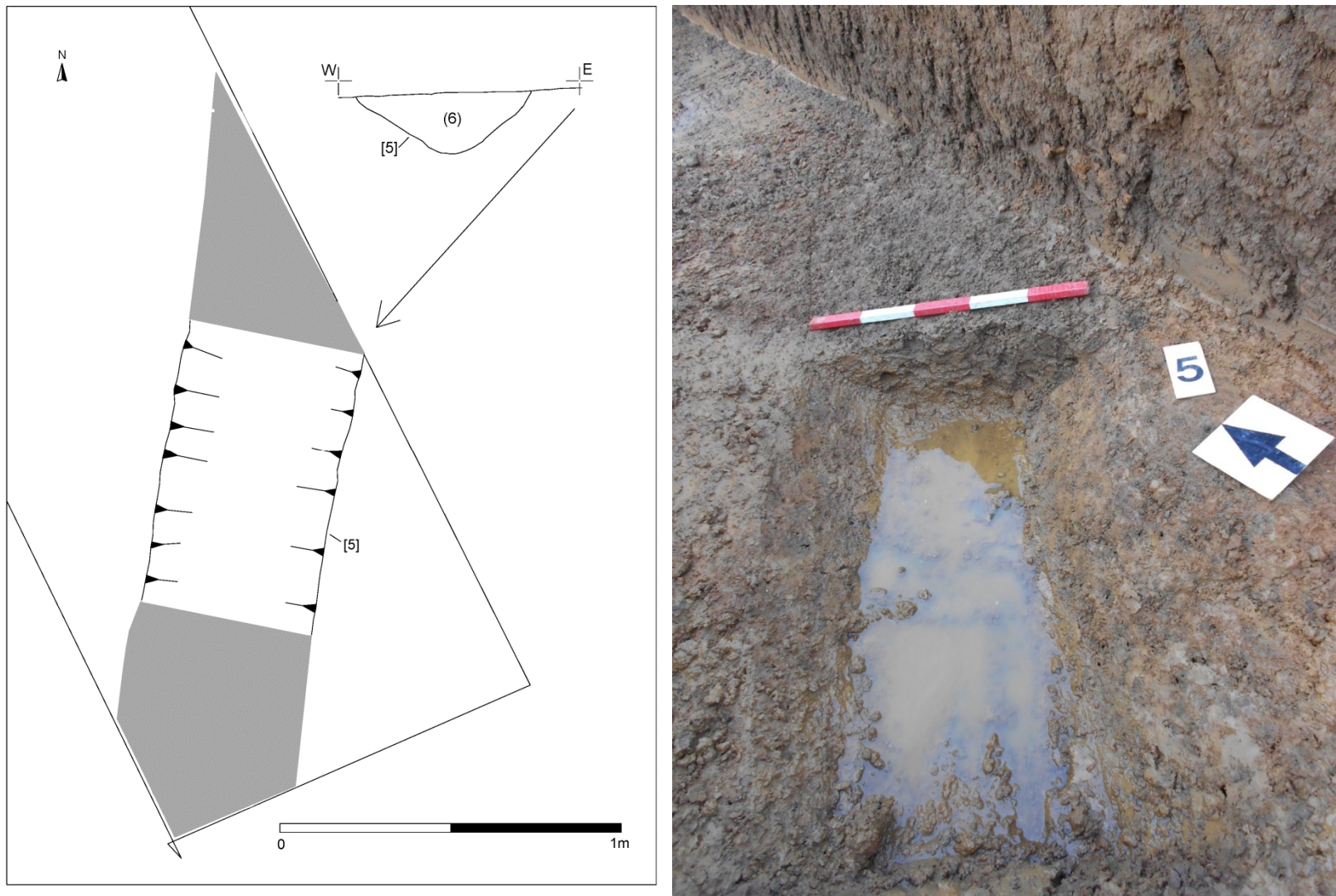


Figure 6: Plan and section and view of gully [5]

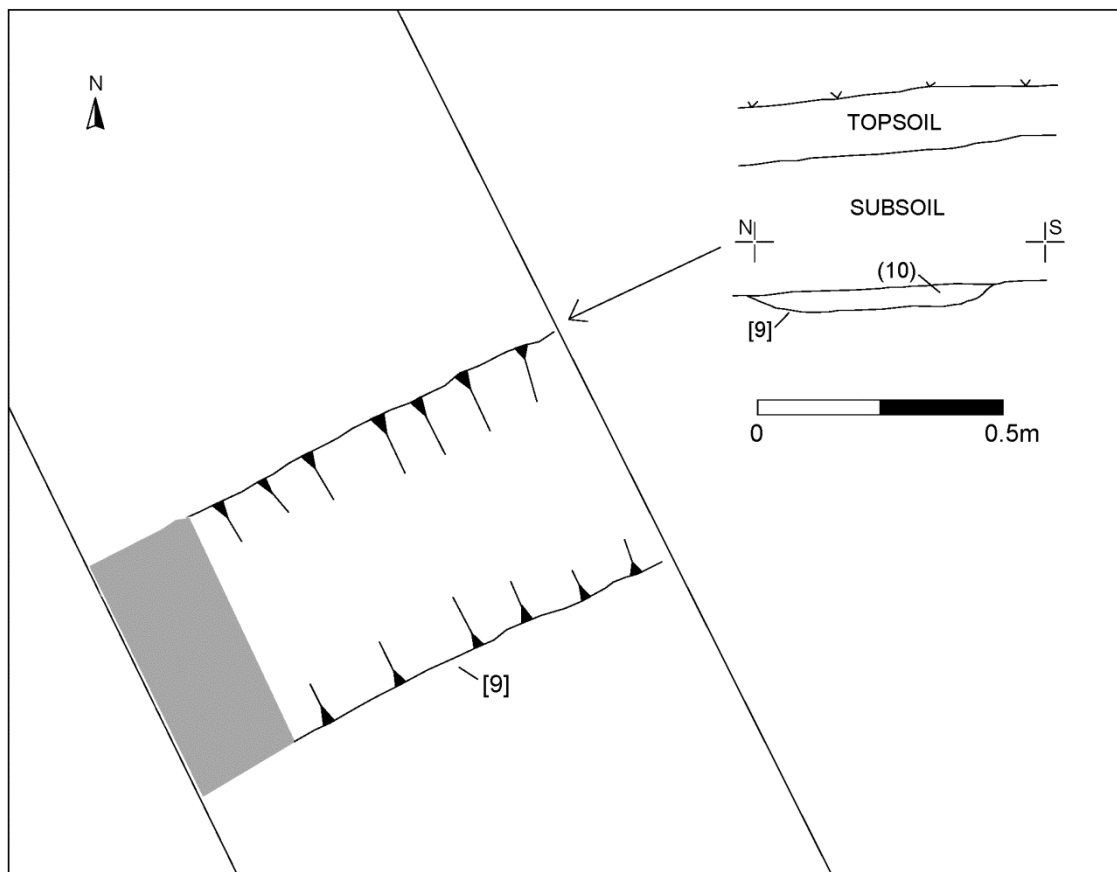


Figure 7: Plan and section of gully [9]

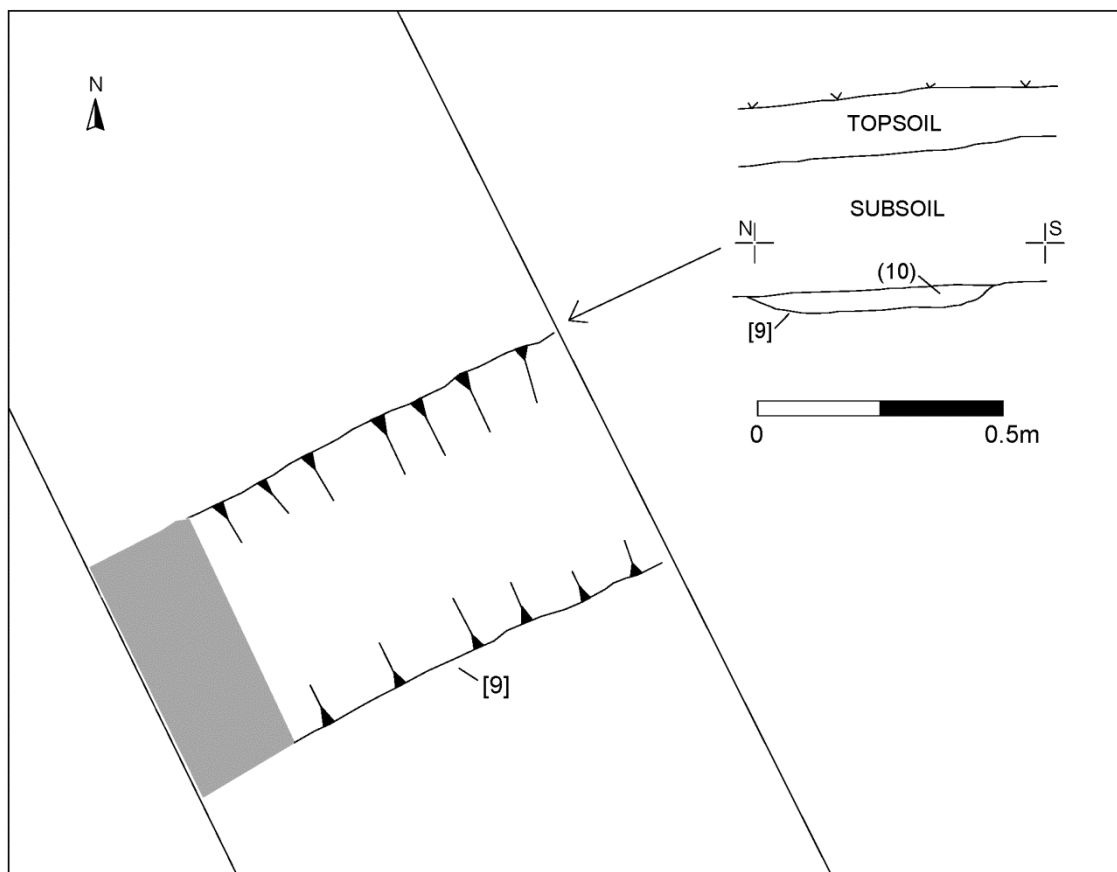


Figure 8: Plan and section of ditch [11]

7. The Finds

Pottery by Nicholas J. Cooper

Introduction

A total of 21 sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery weighing 104g were retrieved from contexts (6) [5] and (12) [11]. The pottery was in an abraded condition and the relatively low average sherd weight of 5g is due to the leaching of shell from the sherds.

Methodology

The pottery has been analysed by form and fabric using the Leicestershire County Museums prehistoric pottery fabric series (Marsden 2011, 62, Table 1), and quantified by sherd count and weight. The assemblage record is presented in full below (Table 2).

Analysis and Dating of the Assemblage by Fabric and Form

Table 2: Quantified Record of Iron Age pottery

Iron Age pottery from Doddington Rd Earls Barton						
Context	Cut	Fabric	Form	Type	Sherds	Weight
6	5	S2	jar	base	2	21
6	5	S2	jar	body	6	27
12	11	S2	jar	body	9	31
12	11	S1	jar	rim	2	5
12	11	S1	jar	body	2	20
Total					21	104

The assemblage is comprised entirely of sherds from handmade jars in shell-tempered fabrics which contain either platy shell fragments (up to 5mm) alone (Fabric S1) or also incorporate fine rounded quartz sand (up to 1mm) (Fabric S2). This is the most common fabric type in Northamptonshire and is also prevalent in Rutland (Cooper 2000) and southern and eastern parts of Leicestershire. Joining sherds of a base of about 140mm in diameter came from (6) and joining sherds from an upright, flattened rim came from (12). The top of the rim extend slightly externally and there a single oval finger-tip impression in the top. It therefore parallels a common form at Twywell where finger-tip decoration along the top of the rim was characteristic (Harding 1975 e.g. fig. 21.5, fig.22.8 and fig.24.12) and a C14 date of 430-340 BC suggested dating early in the 4th century BC, which Elsdon considers extends onwards to the end of the 2nd century BC at least (Elsdon 1992, 88). It is the characteristic decoration of the early East Midlands Scored Ware jars in the Middle Iron Age, and there is single scored body sherd in the same fabric also from (12), which may come from the same vessel.

The Worked Flint by Lynden Cooper

A single thumbnail scraper was recovered from (1) (2) probably dating to the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age. Part of the circumference is broken. An area of the original cortex is preserved on the edge of the flake between two areas of retouch which may suggest the implement was unfinished.

The Animal Bone by Jen Browning

A single sheep-sized bone fragment and sheep tooth fragment were recovered from context (6).

8. Discussion

Of the six trenches excavated, two produced evidence for archaeological deposits (trenches 5 & 6); both in the south field of the development site (Fig. 2). The remaining trenches (trenches 1-4) contained no archaeological finds or deposits.

The archaeological evidence consisted of ditches and gullies. Three of the features contained finds; ditch [2] produced a worked flint of a Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date (although this could be residual) while gully [5] and ditch [11] produced pottery dating to the middle Iron Age (4th – 2nd centuries BC). Ditch [9] was undated, but appears similar in size and fill to the surrounding features and may be contemporary. All of the excavated features contained single fills with no obvious evidence for recuts.

The absence of features in the trenches further north (trenches 1-4) may indicate that activity is focused in the south area of the site. However, it should be noted that ditch [2] orientated north to south continues towards this area and its full extent is currently unknown.

The evidence from the evaluation suggests the presence of a prehistoric settlement or associated field system within the southern part of the development site. The site lies within the Nene Valley, an area known to be rich in archaeological sites of all periods. Within Earls Barton an extensive late Iron Age and Roman settlement was excavated *c.* 500m to the north (Chapman and Atkins 2005), with another settlement *c.* 1km to the south-east (Windell 1983). Iron Age and Roman activity was also encountered in the 1970s *c.* 100m to the north-east (Mills Lane), and *c.* 250m to the south-east (Mount Pleasant). The archaeological deposits located here therefore fit into a landscape where a widespread number of Iron Age and Roman farmsteads and larger settlements have been recorded from earlier excavations in the valley (Deegan 2007).

9. Conclusion

In summary, the evaluation revealed archaeological evidence suggesting an mid-Iron Age settlement, or an associated field system in the south field of the development site. This would fit into the wider Iron Age – Roman landscape of the surrounding area.

The evaluations suggest that there are unlikely to be archaeological deposits in the northern part of the site.

10. Archive and publication

The site archive will be held by ULAS, accession number NH_DREB12, until an appropriate recipient organization is established for Northamptonshire.

The archive contains:

- 6 trench recording sheets
- Context summary records
- 14 context sheets
- 1 photographic recording 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: universi1-137237. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>.

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

ID	OASIS entry summary
Project Name	land to the rear of 11 Doddington Road, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire (SP 85493 63716)
Summary	The evaluation revealed archaeological finds and deposits consisting of ditches/gullies of prehistoric date in the south area of the development site, the remaining trenches being devoid of archaeological evidence. Based on the results of the evaluation, the evidence may indicate a prehistoric settlement, or else field systems close to a settlement.
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Vicki Score
Project Supervisor	Gavin Speed
Previous/Future work	Previous: none / Future: unknown
Current Land Use	Garden
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	NPPF, Section 12
Position in the Planning Process	Planning condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 6787 9273
Start/end dates of field work	18/10/2012
Archive Recipient	TBC
Study Area	0.5ha
Associated project reference codes	Museum accession ID: NH_DREB12 OASIS form ID: universi1-137237

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12. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was funded by Insight Planning Ltd, and was carried out by Gavin Speed and Steve Baker. Vicki Score managed the project. Liz Mordue (County Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council) monitored the work on behalf of the planning authority. We would like to thank R. Whyman for arranging access and supplying the plant.

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Appendix 1: Context details

CONTEXT NO	CUT NO	BELOW	TRENCH	DESCRIPTION
1	2	Subsoil	5	Gully fill
2	2	1	5	Gully cut
3	4	Subsoil	5	Gully fill
4	4	3	5	Gully cut
5	5	6	6	Gully cut
6	5	Subsoil	6	Gully fill
7	8	Subsoil	5	Fully fill
8	8	7	5	Gully cut
9	9	10	6	Gully cut
10	9	Subsoil	6	Gully fill
11	11	12	6	Ditch cut
12	11	Subsoil	6	Ditch fill
13	13	14	5	Gully cut
14	13	Subsoil	5	Gully fill

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