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Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Observation,
Investigation and Recording of
Land adjacent to The Abbots,
Weekley Wood Lane, Weekley.**

NGR SP 88570 80843

Richard Huxley



**ULAS Report 2018-109
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**Archaeological Observation,
Investigation and Recording
of Land Adjacent to The Abbots,
Weekley Wood Lane,
Weekley**

NGR: SP 88570 80843

Richard Huxley

**For: Mr. S. Dhinsa
Planning Ref: KET/2017/0702
Planning Authority: Kettering Borough Council**

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Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording of Land adjacent to The Abbots, Weekley Wood Lane, Weekley

Richard Huxley

Summary

This document provides the results of archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication of ground works for a new dwelling on land adjacent to The Abbots, Weekley Wood Lane, Weekley. The work was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment). The results of the excavation show archaeological remains were present within the development area comprising large medieval quarry pits which contained heated ironstone and iron slag. These features dated from 1100 to 1640 and represent a continuation of land-use on the site, with a particular concentration of activity between 1100 and 1450.

The report will be archived under accession number ENN108980.

Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication (OIRAP) exercise undertaken by ULAS in June 2018 on land at Weekley Wood Lane, Weekley (NGR: SP 88570 80843). The work was commissioned by Mr S. Dhinsa, ahead of a planned housing development consisting of one dwelling with attached double garage.

The original approach had been to investigate the development area through a Strip, Map and Sample excavation, involving a full strip and recording of the building footprint (LaCombe 2018). However because of the reduced impact of the building scheme, the area was not excavated as fully as originally intended, and instead an OIRAP approach was employed. The change of approach did not affect the level of investigation of archaeological features, which was as agreed in the WSI.

Many areas of archaeological activity have been identified in the locality of Weekley and the surrounding land has been occupied since the prehistoric period. In view of this, the Assistant Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), has advised the Planning Officer that the development should have professional archaeological attendance. A strip, map and sample excavation was employed to record any archaeological deposits that might be impacted by the proposed scheme.

The programme of archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment) and the agreed scheme was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (LaCombe 2018) agreed beforehand with the Planning Archaeologist.

Site Description, Topography and Geology

Weekley occupies some 640 hectares and is located on the north-eastern edge of Kettering and lies in the district of South Northamptonshire. The development area is positioned to the west

of the village adjacent to The Abbots. The site is bounded by Weekley Wood Lane to the north, agricultural land to the south and residential houses to the east and west.

The development area occupies land measuring approximately 248m² which is undulating with a slight slope to the east and a height of approximately 85mOD. The area surrounding the development is to be used as a garden. The British Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates the underlying geology is composed of Grantham Formation sandstone, siltstone and mudstone (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

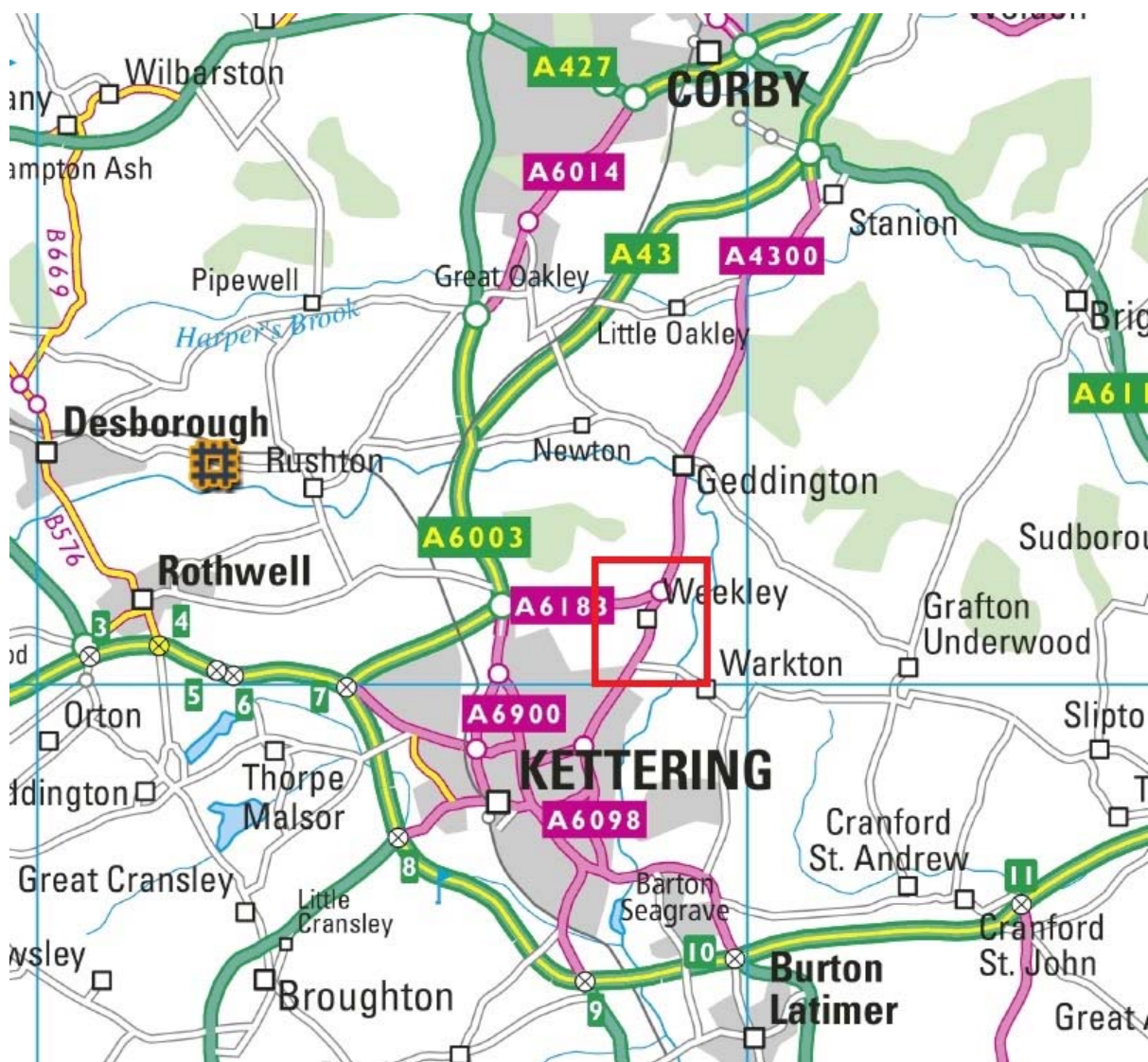


Figure 1: Location of Weekley (outlined red) to the north-east of Kettering 1:100000 scale. By permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright 2000. All rights reserved. License number AL 100029495.

Archaeological and Historical Background

Weekley lies within the ancient forest of Rockingham and there is evidence of continual occupation of the surrounding land from the Iron Age through to the medieval period and modern times. Consequently there are over 200 entries within 1km of the site in the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) (LaCombe 2018).

There is an area of roman settlement (MNN5668) and pottery production (MNN116535, MNN140074) recorded on the higher ground to the east and west of the village. This same area was also occupied during the Iron Age and Saxon periods. A round house (MNN116538) and pits, D-shaped enclosure (MNN144510) and boundary ditches (MNN144520) have been discovered, along with Saxon pottery (MNN32959) and area of late Saxon occupation (MNN1513) (LaCombe 2018).

No. 52 Weekley wood lane is located 55m to the north-west of the development area on the opposite side of the road and was also subject to a strip, map and record excavation. The excavation found the stone remains of a 12th- 13th century building close to the street with intensive burning from ovens or hearths within it, a stone lined corn dryer and large quarry pit at the back of the structure. There was also a Romano-British feature found to the north (PCA 2015).

Another area of archaeological interest is the park surrounding Boughton House. Here the land-use and occupation of many centuries has been encapsulated by landscaping (MNN122396), with many different stages of archaeological development having been preserved in this area. The abandoned medieval village of Boughton still remains as earthworks, together with the sounding ridge-and-furrow. The late medieval deer park which later replaced them both can also be traced. The subsequent 17th-century extension of the park led to changes in the road system of the adjacent village of Weekley. Parts of the original layout survive. Finally, the elaborate late 17th and early 18th century gardens and park, which themselves had a complex history of development, remain almost completely intact. These landscapes are among the most impressive and well preserved of any in the county (LaCombe 2018).

The Church of St. Mary the Virgin (Church record 10361, MNN106996, MNN16441) sits just outside the village on the north side. It is a grade I listed building built largely in the 14th – 15th centuries with origins of c.1200 (LaCombe 2018).

Several Listed buildings are also situated close to the proposed development area, mostly east and south-east of the site situated within the historic medieval core of the village: south-east of the proposed development site are thatched cottages, Grade II listed, No's 6 and 7 Weekly (MNN107017). Number 2, Weekly is a grade II listed 18th century and 19th century cottage with thatch and slate roof (MLE107015). Number 1, Weekly is an 18th century cottage with later additions, Grade II listed (MLE107014). Post office is a Grade II listed building (1372404) incorporating an 18th century cottage with a rear wing 19th century (LaCombe 2018).

On the land directly to the north of the proposed area for development, a Magnetometer survey was carried out prior to the construction of the Kettering Northern By-pass (1841528). This was accompanied by a watching brief, (1061999, 1841530) and evaluation (1061998) (LaCombe 2018).

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the archaeological work was:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.

- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to compare with other assemblages and results.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets.
- To produce an archive and report any results.

Within the stated project aims, the principal objective of the recording is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context.

Initial objectives were derived from East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands (Knight et al. 2012) and The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda (Cooper 2006).

The villages of the English Central Midlands, appear to have evolved alongside their open field systems, during the later 1st millennium AD. Buried archaeological evidence spanning the period from the earliest evolution of the village to its more recent past might be present within the development area. The archaeological work may contribute towards research into the origins and development of medieval settlement, landscape and society. Environmental evidence could provide information on local environmental conditions as well as settlement activity, craft, industry and land use. Artefacts can assist in the development of a type series within the region and provide evidence for evidence for craft, industry and exchange across broad landscape areas. The excavation has the potential to contribute to Research Agenda topics 6.7.1, 7.2.1-7.2.4, 7.6.1, 7.7.1-7.7.5

6C Review the evidence for developing settlement hierarchies

7C Investigate provisioning of the medieval town

7E Investigate the morphology of rural settlements

7I Investigate the development of the open-field system and woodland management.

Methodology

The work followed the Written Scheme of Investigation (LaCombe 2018) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct (2014a) and adhered to their Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations (2014b). An accession number/site code was obtained prior to commencement of the project and used to identify all records and artefacts.

Prior to any machining general photographs of the site areas were taken. The programme of work consisted of the excavation of the footprint of the building. Prior to the strip 2 trenches measuring approximately 6m long by 1.6m wide were excavated from the southern edge of the building to the centre to assess the depth of deposits and potential impact of the proposed building work (see Figure 2). The floors of the building would disturb the upper 0.15m and footings were to truncate approximately 1.1m depth.

Excavation was carried out using a JCB fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket to expose the underlying strata. Topsoil and overburden were removed carefully in level spits, under continuous archaeological supervision. The trenches were excavated down to the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed ground which was found to measure between 0.42-0.6m deep.

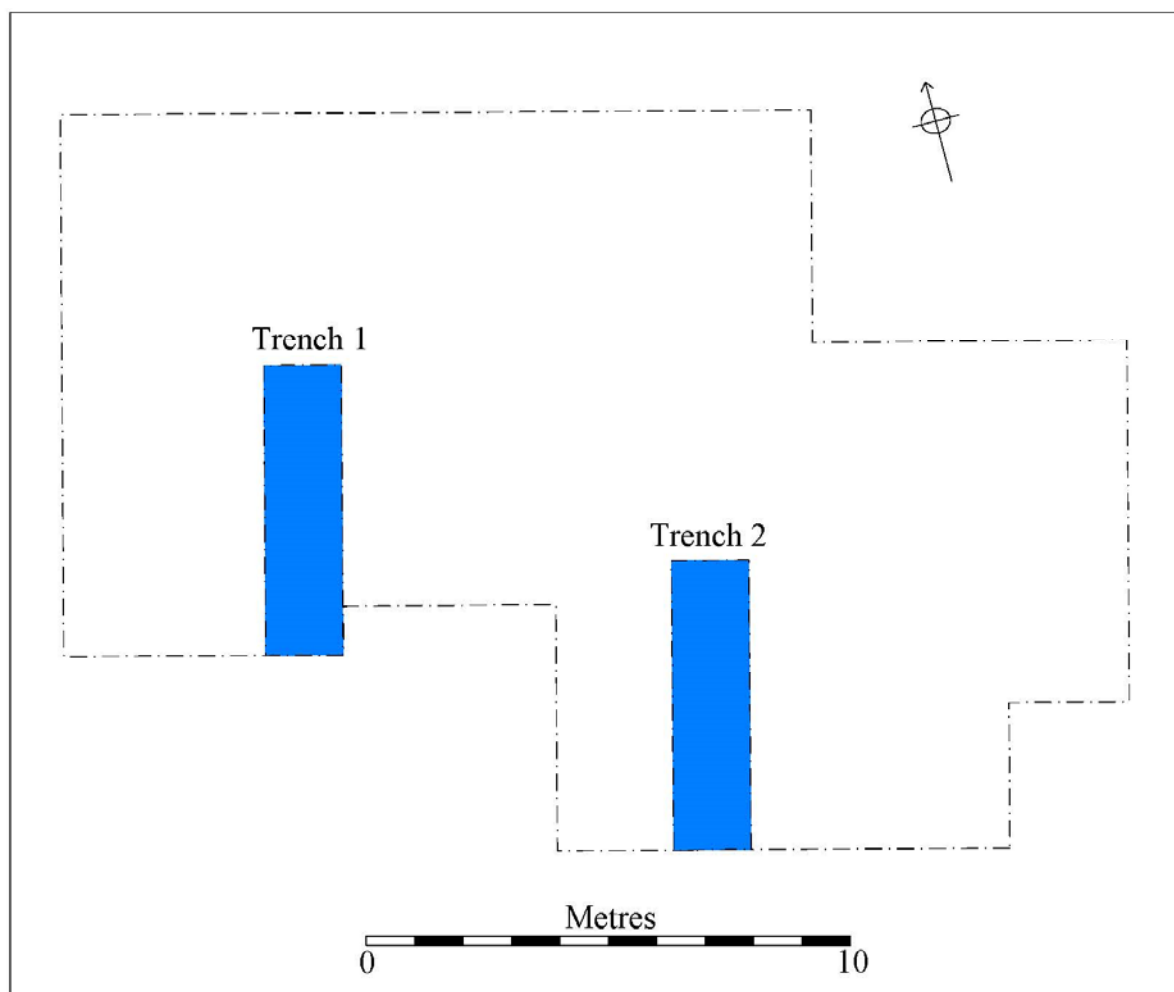


Figure 2: Position of trenches excavated to determine the depth of deposits.

The impact from the proposed floors was deemed to be minimal with the archaeological horizon below the level of development and as such the entire footprint of the building was not stripped. The perimeter of the development was stripped since the depth of the footings would disturb any archaeological remains. The northern edge of the development area was found to have just a 0.16m deep layer of topsoil overlaying the natural substratum or archaeological deposits and a wider area of 2.5m was stripped until the depth of ground increased.

The ULAS recording manual was used as a guide for all recording. Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed were entered onto pro-forma recording sheets.

Results

The topsoil (1) varied from 0.16-0.52m thick and was found to be shallowest in the north and deepest in the south. It was composed of a dark brownish-grey coloured soft and friable loamy-silt which contained small stones, ash and charcoal. Many early 20th century glass bottles were found in the topsoil in the southern half of the development area in addition to modern pottery. The subsoil (2) measured 0.15m thick and was not present in the northern edge of the development area. It was composed of mid yellow-brown soft friable sandy silt which occasionally contained small pebbles. Deposit (3) (Figure 3) was found in the southern end of the development area occupying the same stratigraphic position as the subsoil. This layer was coloured mid brownish-grey and was composed of post-medieval building rubble consisting of <0.2m limestone blocks, slate, ceramic building material (CBM) and mortar in a matrix of silt, ash and charcoal. Modern pottery was also found within this layer.



Figure 3: Subsoil (2) and deposit (3) containing post-medieval building rubble, looking north-west

The natural substratum was consistent across the development area and was composed of a mixture of limestone and ironstone fragments <0.15m in size within a matrix of mid brownish yellow silt with patches of orangey red clay. The superficial geology was found to be overlaying a hard limestone bedrock.

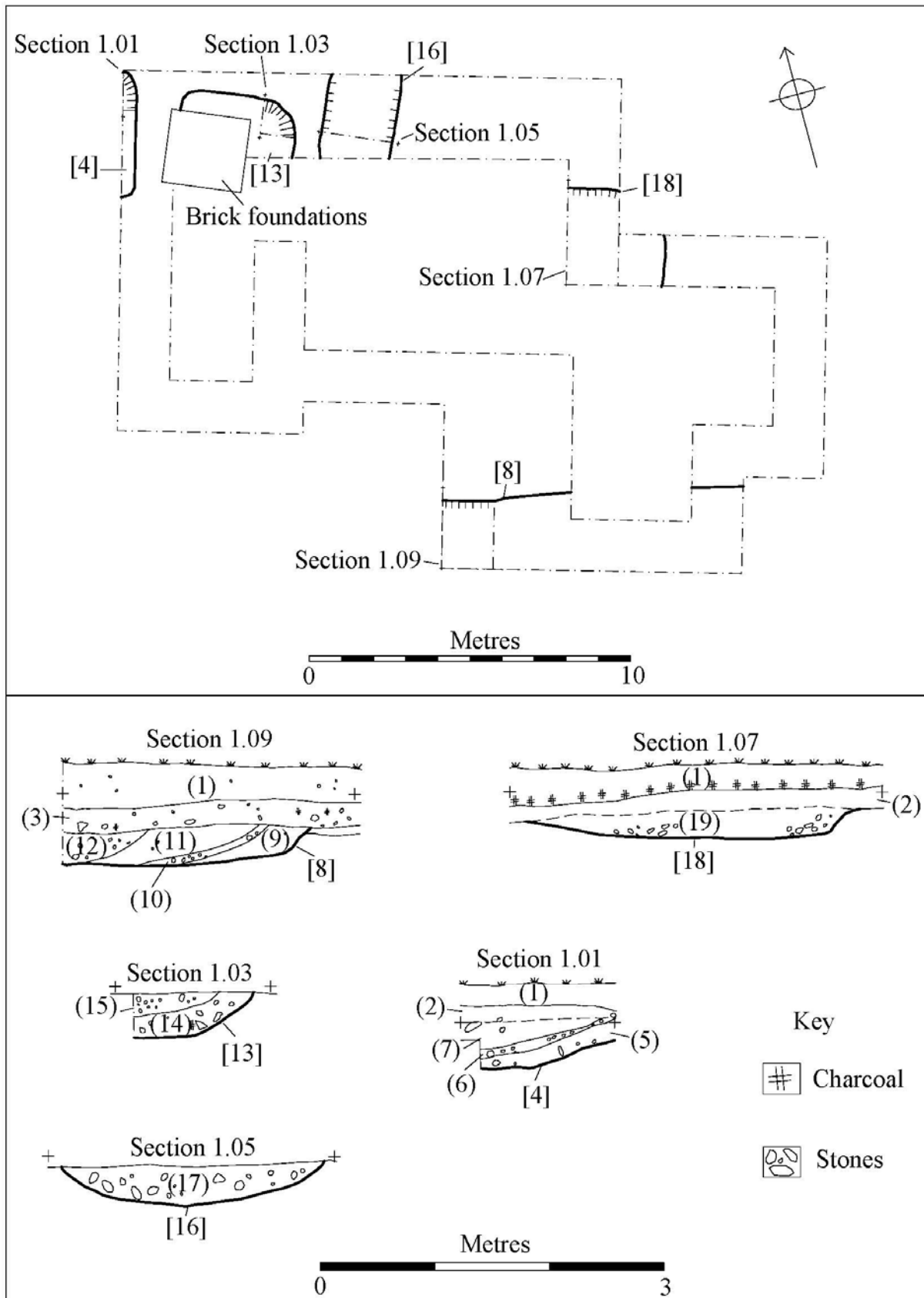


Figure 4: Site plan and sections through the features.

The southern edge of the development area was found to contain a large feature which measured >9.3m long by >2.2m wide and 0.32m deep. Feature [8] had straight, moderately sloping sides with a flat base and was filled with several deposits (See Figure 5). The primary fill consisted of a soft and friable mid-yellowish brown sandy silt (9) that contained fragments of limestone and medieval pottery dating 1100-1200. The secondary fill (10) was composed of a mid brownish-yellow coloured silt with limestone inclusions <0.1m in size and small fragments of ironstone and patches of orangey red clay. This layer was interpreted as redeposited natural. The tertiary fill (11) was the same composition as deposit (9) and was found to contain iron slag in addition to medieval pottery dating 1100-1400. The upper fill (12) was composed of a mid-yellowish brown sandy silt with patches of redeposited natural.



Figure 5: Large feature [8] in the southern edge of site

The north-western corner of the development area was found to contain brick foundations for a small structure positioned approximately 1m from the edge of site. These were found to be truncating both the topsoil and subsoil. Between the brick foundations and the western edge of the site a large pit [4] was found (see Figure 6). This feature was poorly defined and measured 3.9m long by >0.4m wide by 0.38m deep and was orientated north-east to south-west. It was incomplete but probably oval or sub-oval in shape with concave and moderately sloping sides and a flat base. The primary fill of the pit (5) was composed of mid yellowish brown friable sandy silt which contained small angular fragments of ironstone and an animal tooth. The secondary fill (6) consisted of mid brownish yellow silt with limestone fragments <0.1m in size, patches of orangey red clay and was interpreted as redeposited natural. Overlaying this was a tertiary fill (7) that was composed of mid yellowish brown sandy silt which contained inclusions of limestone and ironstone. Animal bone and medieval pottery dating 1150-1400 was found within this deposit.



Figure 6: Post-excitation shot of pit [4], looking west

To the east of pit [4] a second large pit [13] (see Figure 7) was found which measured 3.6m long by >1.7m wide by 0.4m deep and was being truncated by the modern brick foundations. Pit [13] was a poorly defined sub-oval shape orientated north-east to south-west and had straight moderately sloping sides with a flat base. It was filled with a mid-yellowish brown primary fill (14) that was composed of friable sandy silt with angular limestone fragments <0.2m in size and occasional flecks of charcoal. Medieval pottery dating to 1450-1640 was also found in this layer. Overlaying this was a secondary fill (15) which was composed of a mid-brownish yellow firm sandy silt that contained angular limestone and ironstone fragments <0.08m in size with patches of orangey red clay. Within this layer heated ironstone was found in addition to medieval pottery dating 1150-1400 and animal bone.



Figure 7: Post-excavation shot of pit [13], looking north-west

To the east of pit [13] a third pit [16] (see Figure 8) was found which measured >3.2m long by 2.5m wide and 0.33m deep. Pit [16] was very poorly defined oval shape which was orientated north-east to south-west. It had moderately sloping concave sides with a concave base and was filled with a mid-yellowish brown coloured mixture of sandy silt and redeposited natural (17). This deposit contained medieval pottery dating 1225-1400.



Figure 8: Post-excitation shot of pit [16], looking west

The north-eastern edge of the development area was found to contain a fourth pit [18] (see Figure 9) which measured >3m long by >3m wide and 0.24m deep. Pit [18] was incomplete and poorly defined but probably sub-oval or sub-circular in shape with straight moderately sloping sides and a roughly flat base. The feature was filled with a mid-yellowish brown friable sandy silt (19) that contained angular limestone fragments <0.1m in size and medieval pottery dating 1225-1400.



Figure 9: Pre-excitation shot of pit [18], looking north-west

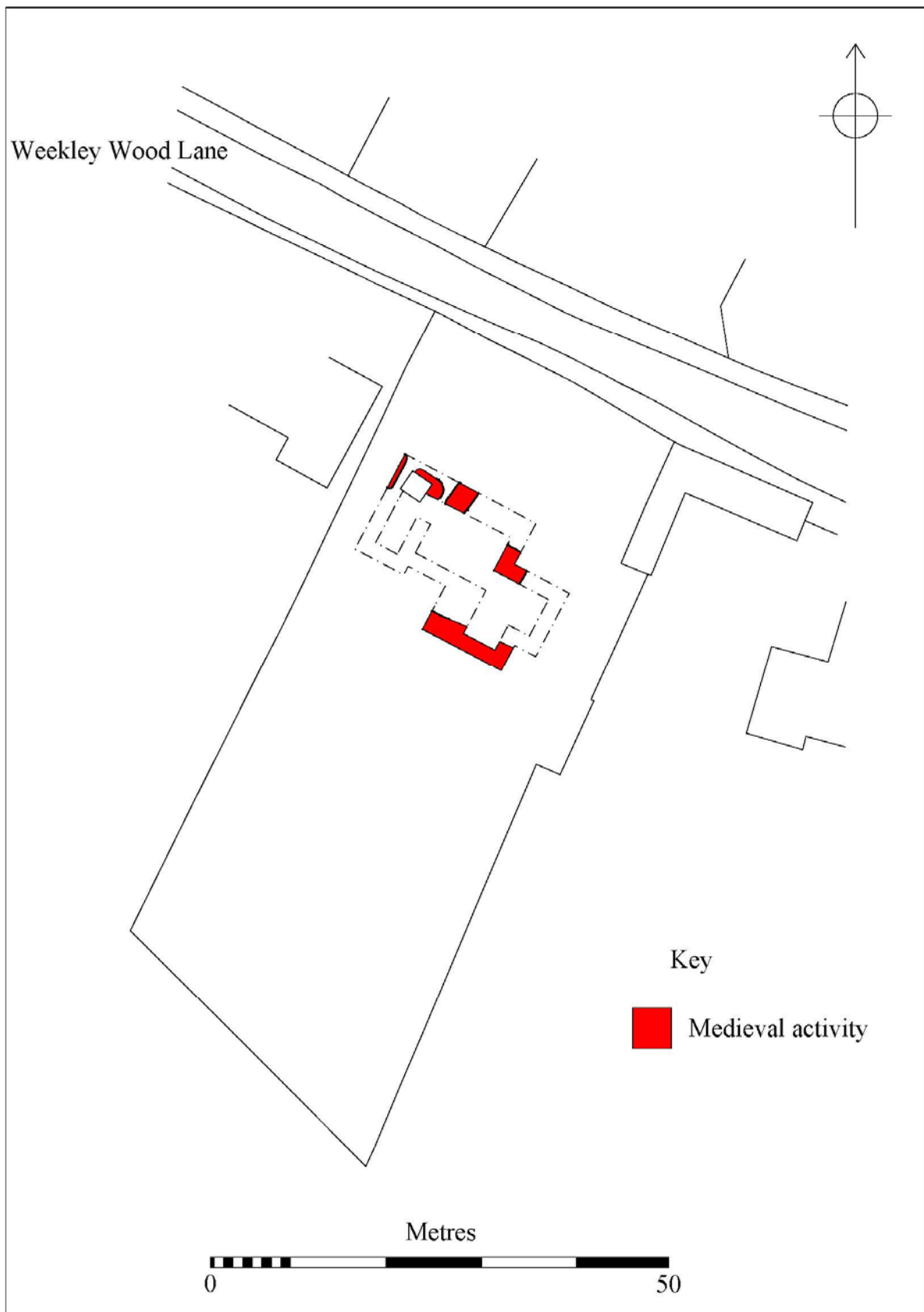


Figure 10: Location of the medieval activity in relation to Weekley Wood Lane.

The Finds -Deborah Sawday

The pottery assemblage was made up of 23 sherds, weighing 295 grams and representing seventeen vessels. A fragment of ceramic building material weighing 326 grams, bottle glass, and slag were also recorded.

Methodology

The pottery was examined under an x20 binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to current guidelines (MPRG 1998, MPRG 2016) and the Northamptonshire fabric series (Blinkhorn 1996). The results are shown below (tables 1 and 2). Table 1 lists the pottery by fabric and table 2 catalogues the pottery and miscellaneous finds by context. Single pottery sherds have been counted as one vessel.

Condition

The pottery was showed little sign of abrasion but had a relatively low average sherd weight (table 1).

The Ceramic Record

All were body sherds and no identifiable vessels were present, although many of the glazed sherds were probably table wares such as jugs.

Table 1: The medieval pottery site totals by fabric, sherd number, weight (grams), vessel count and average sherd weight (ASW).

Fabric	No.	Gr	Min. Vessel	ASW
Medieval				
F205 – Stamford ware	1	1	1	
F330 – Shelly Coarse ware	3	19	2	
F319 – Lyveden/Stanion A	6	51	3	
F320 – Lyveden/Stanion B	7	53	6	
Sub Total	17	124	12	7.2
Late Medieval/Early Post Medieval				
F346 – Bourne D ware:	1	16	1	
Sub Total	1	16	1	16.0
Modern				
F430 - China	4	70	3	
Stoneware	1	85	1	
Sub Total	5	155	4	
Site Totals	23	295	17	

Conclusion

The medieval and early post-medieval pottery fabrics are typical of the region; Stamford, Lyveden Stanion and Bourne were major centres of pottery production at this time. The earlier material dates from the 12th or 13th centuries to c.1450 – 1640 and is evidently associated with the medieval village. The modern finds are thought to be originate from the adjacent house, the Abbots, which until recently owned the land (R. Huxley pers. comm.).

Table 2: The pottery and miscellaneous finds by context, material, number, and weight (grams).

Context	Fabric/ware	No	Gr	Comments
POT				
1	F430 - China	3	57	Modern, 3 vessels
1	Stoneware	1	85	modern
3	F430 - China	1	13	modern
7	F320 – Lyveden/Stanion B	1	7	Lead glaze 1225-1400
7	F320	1	3	1200-1400
7	F319 – Lyveden/Stanion A	3	34	Body fragments decorated with thumbled clay strips – two vessels. 1150-1400
9 [8] pit	F205 – Stamford ware	1	1	Lead glaze, 1100-1200
10	F330 – Shelly Coarse ware	3	19	2 vessels, 1100-1400.
14	F346 – Bourne D ware:	1	16	c.1450-1640
15	F320 – Lyveden/Stanion B	2	9	Join, lead glaze 1225-1400
15	F320	1	16	1225-1400
15	F319– Lyveden/Stanion A	3	17	One vessel. 1150-1400
17	F320 – Lyveden/Stanion B	1	11	Lead glaze. 1225-1400
19	F320	1	7	Lead glaze. 1225-1400
CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL				
3	Earthenware	1	326	Roof tile
IRON/IRONSTONE – H. Addison (pers. comm.)				
11 [8] pit	Slag	2	181	Amorphous Fe smithing hearth slag
15	Ironstone	5	624	Ironstone showing evidence of heat alteration – discarded.
MISC.				
1	Modern Glass	3		Discarded
3	Bottle glass	1		Wine bottle - ?18 th C.
ANIMAL BONE				
1		1		
5		1		
7		1		
10		1		
15		1		

Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the excavation show that archaeological remains were present on the site, with medieval activity dating from 1100 to 1640 (Sawday, p14) being found across the development area (see Figure 10). The majority of activity appears to date to between 1100 and 1450. The medieval features were found to be below modern deposit (3) in the southern area. This layer was found to contain similar building materials to those used in the post-medieval building 'The Abbots' as well as surrounding outbuildings adjacent to the site. Therefore it seems likely that this deposit is contemporary with this building and possibly represents a deliberate infilling or attempt to level the ground.

Four of the medieval features consisted of large pits measuring 3-4m long and were found across the development area. Feature [8] was found along the southern edge of the site and was initially thought to represent a ditch due to its size however it shares many similar characteristics to the pits found on the site. This feature potentially represents an unusually large >9.3m long pit.

The medieval features were all filled by very similar deposits and were generally composed of mid-yellowish brown sandy silt with layers of redeposited natural. The sandy silts within the pits were a very similar composition to the subsoil and the layers of redeposited natural were often inclined which gave the appearance of tip lines. Tip lines are formed by material falling into the features from one side and this suggests the pits were backfilled.

The pits were all found to have a similar depth ranging from 0.24-0.4m and were only dug through the upper superficial geology and not penetrating the hard limestone bedrock below. Within features [8] and [13] iron slag and heated ironstone were found in addition to medieval pottery (Sawday, p10). The superficial geology was found to contain inclusions of ironstone and it seems likely the recovery of this was the aim of the pits. The purpose of the medieval activity is likely to be quarry pits excavated for the recovery of ironstone to smelt.

The results from this excavation is comparable to No. 52, Weekley Wood Lane located on the opposite side of the road to the development area. At this site a large quarry pit was found at the back of a 12th-13th century property which contained evidence for ovens or hearths within it (Malloy, 2015). The quarry pit at No. 52 is positioned approximately 14m from the road and the quarry pits found in the development area are positioned about 15m away. Therefore the quarry pitting found during the excavation is consistent with activity occurring at the back of medieval properties.

Archive

The paper archive consists of:

- 1 x A2 drawing sheet
- 1 x Watching Brief Recording form
- 1 x Photographic record indices
- 31 digital photographs
- A risk assessment form
- 14 x Context recording sheets
- 1 x Context record indices

Acknowledgements

Richard Huxley of ULAS undertook the archaeological monitoring on behalf of Mr S. Dhinsa. The project was managed by John Thomas. The ceramic analysis was carried out by Deborah Sawday and the iron smelting residue analysis was carried out by Heidi Addison.

Thanks to Planters for providing the JCB excavator, excavating the area and Mr S. Dhinsa for commissioning of the work.

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Oasis Information

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1- 319373		
	Project Name	Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication (OIRAP) on Land adjacent to The Abbots, Weekley Wood Lane		
	Start/end dates of field work	04-06-2018 to 05- 06-2018		
	Previous/Future Work	No/Not known		
	Project Type	Field evaluation		
	Site Status			
	Current Land Use	Other 5-Garden		
	Monument Type/Period	Pits/medieval		
	Significant Finds/Period	Pottery/medieval Slag/ medieval Animal bone/medieval		
	Development Type	House construction		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Planning Condition		
	Planning Ref.	KET/2017/0702		
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Weekley Wood Lane, Weekley, NN17 3EP		
	Study Area	248 m ²		
	Site Coordinates	SP 88570 80843		
	Height OD	OD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Originator Brief	University		
	Project Originator Design	Claire LaCombe		
	Project Manager	John Thomas		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Richard Huxley		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Landowner		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	NCC	NCC	NCC
	ID (Acc. No.)	ENN108980	ENN108980	ENN108980
	Contents	Pottery	Photos	Notebook-Excavation
		Bone		Photograph
	Slag		Plan	
			Report	
			Context sheets	
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