



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological evaluation at the proposed
Daventry Town Centre Vision, Sites 3 & 6
Daventry, Northamptonshire
September-October 2010



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DAVENTRY CANAL ARM

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project name	An archaeological evaluation at the proposed Daventry town centre vision sites 3 & 6, Daventry, Northamptonshire
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an evaluation on land adjacent to Eastern Way Daventry. The evaluation comprised the excavation of four test pits, only one of which contained archaeology. In Test pit 4 a floor surface and post-pad dating to the 12th century were uncovered. These are likely to form part of a timber frame building possibly fronted onto Welton Road.
Project type	Evaluation
Current Land use	Public open space
Future work	Unknown
Monument type/ period	Medieval
Significant finds	Post pad and floor surface of a medieval building
PROJECT LOCATION	
County	Northamptonshire
Site address	Daventry, Eastern Way
Study area ha	7.2ha
OS Easting & Northing	SP 5731 6289
PROJECT CREATORS	
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Project brief originator	Leslie-Ann Mather NCC Archaeological Advisor
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Director/Supervisor	Tim Upson-Smith
Project Manager	Adam Yates
Sponsor or funding body	Daventry District Council
PROJECT DATE	
Start date	September 2010
End date	October 2010
ARCHIVES	Location Paper
Paper	
Digital	1 Disc containing digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
Title	unpublished client report (NA report) An archaeological evaluation at the proposed Daventry town centre vision sites 3 & 6, Daventry, Northamptonshire
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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT
THE PROPOSED DAVENTRY TOWN CENTRE VISION
SITES 3 & 6,
DAVENTRY,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2010**

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an evaluation on land adjacent to Eastern Way Daventry. The evaluation comprised the excavation of four test pits, only one of which contained archaeology. In Test pit 4 a floor surface and post-pad dating to the 12th century were uncovered. These are likely to form part of a timber frame building possibly fronted onto Welton Road.

1 INTRODUCTION

Over a three day period at the end of September and the beginning of October 2010, Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) carried out an archaeological test pit evaluation of a plot of land off Eastern Way, Daventry, Northamptonshire (site centred on NGR: SP 5731 6289; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Daventry District Council, and was carried out prior to the development of the land for a canal basin, housing and a recreation area.

This report, which has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in English Heritage's procedural documents Management of Archaeological Projects 2 (1991) and Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (EH 2006), details the results of the trial trench evaluation.

1.1 Historical and archaeological background

The archaeological background is provided within the existing documents associated with the proposed application; the DBA, Cultural Heritage and the technical Appendix to Chapter 15 (Cultural Heritage). The documents identified that the area had potential to contain significant archaeological activity. The Extensive Urban Survey for Daventry, (which can be viewed at the Northamptonshire HER), also provides information on the archaeological potential of the area. It concludes that it is most likely that activity relating to the medieval period is present within the evaluation area. The site is located on the northern side of Daventry in an area which historically has been seen as part of the open field system, as evidenced by the surviving ridge and furrow earthworks in the northern part of the site.

1.2 Topography and geology

The site covers an area of approximately 7.2ha, and it lies at a height of between c139m and c128m AOD. The site is currently grassed open parkland. The northern area was formally a pitch and put golf course and on its western side has upstanding ridge and furrow earthworks.

The underlying geology comprise Lias Group, Mudstone, Siltstone, Limestone and Sandstone (<http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/GeoIndex/default.aspx>).

1.3 Objectives and methodology

Aims and objectives

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the investigation were to:

- Establish the date, nature and extent of the activity or occupation on the development site
- Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions

Excavation methodology

One trench, which measured 1.8m wide and 10m long was excavated together with three 5x5m test pits (Fig 2). Each trench was located using a Leica System 1200 GPS and machine-excavated using a flat toothless bucket under continuous archaeological supervision, with the topsoil and subsoil stacked separately and adjacent to the trenches. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the top of the archaeological deposits or to the natural substrate where no archaeology was encountered. All trenches once excavated were fenced with heras fencing panels, as the site had open and public access.

Archaeological excavation and recording followed the guidelines outlined in the NA Archaeological Fieldwork Manual (2003). Trenches containing archaeological remains were cleaned by hand, sufficient to define the features. Each feature or deposit was given a unique number consisting of the trench number and an individual context number (e.g. 402, Trench 4, context 2). The details of each context were recorded on pro-forma sheets. The trenches were planned (scale 1:50) and section drawings were made at an appropriate scale (1:10 or 1:20). Levels, which were related to Ordnance Datum, were taken on the trenches at appropriate points, on section datum and on all major features. Trench locations were related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record was made of the excavation, using 35mm black and white negative film, supplemented by digital images.

Artefacts were collected by hand and retained, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from site (UKIC 1998). The spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. Unstratified animal bones and modern material were not retained. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA 1993).

All works were carried out accordance with the specification prepared by NA (NA 2010), and the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct (1985, revised 2009) and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (1994, revised 2008). All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

The project was monitored by Leslie-Ann Mather, Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Advisor, and managed for Hyder Consulting by Jim Hunter.

2 SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

2.1 Trenches 1-3

No archaeological features were present in trenches one, two and three. Trench 1 was located in the northern part of the site on a former pitch and put golf course, across an area of extant ridge and furrow earthworks. Natural red clay marl (103) was exposed at a depth of c0.6m below present ground surface, this was overlain by a red-brown loam subsoil (102) c0.4m thick, which in turn was overlain by the mid grey-brown topsoil (101) c0.15m thick.

Trench 2 was located in the south-western part of the playing field in the southern part of the site. Blue-grey clay and peat (203) was exposed at a depth of c1.05m below present ground surface, this was overlain by a clean buff clay alluvial layer (202), c0.6m thick which in turn was overlain by a grey-brown loam topsoil (201) c0.12m thick .

Trench 3 was located towards the centre of the playing field part of the site, clean buff clay (303) was exposed at a depth of c0.55m below present ground surface, this was overlain by a layer of brown-buff silty clay subsoil (302) c0.2m thick, which in turn was overlain by a mid grey-brown loam topsoil (301) c0.15m thick.

2.2 Trench 4 (Fig 3)

This trench was located in the western part of the site adjacent to Welton Road. Archaeology was exposed at a depth of c0.74m below the present ground surface overlying the natural buff clay (406). It consisted of an ironstone rubble surface (407) with a post-pad (408) set into it. The surface was dated by pottery to the 12th century. A medieval iron knife was recovered from a sondage excavated into this layer (see section 3.3).

To the west of (408) was a thin surface interpreted as a floor (410). This layer consisted of dark brown-grey clay with occasional thin mortar patches. On the northern side of the test pit there was a layer of orange-brown silty clay (405) which had an irregular boundary with the natural, this layer was also dated by pottery to the 12th century. It was not possible in the confines of the excavated area to interpret how the layer formed.

The archaeology was overlain by a two probable alluvial deposits, (403) and (404), both c0.10m thick consisting of a slightly gritty light brown silty clay, with occasional water worn pebbles. Overlying (403) was a light brown clay loam subsoil (402) c0.1m thick. This in turn was overlain by a mid brown clay loam topsoil (401) c0.14m thick.

3 FINDS

3.1 Flint by Yvonne Wolfram Murray

Two pieces of worked flint were recovered as residual finds from medieval features. The flints comprised of one blade and one core fragment, summarised in Table 1 below. Post-deposition edge damage consisted of occasional to frequent nicks on the two pieces. The raw material was a vitreous flint of light to mid brown colour and the cortex was mid brown and worn, suggesting a local gravel origin. The blade was squat with a broad striking platform, measuring 28mm long and 14mm wide. The core fragment was a thermal fracture, also two striking platforms could be noted on the fragment. The

worked flints are not directly dateable but their technological characteristics suggest a broadly Neolithic date. No further work is recommended.

Table 1 Summary of worked flint

Tr.	Context	SF	Object	Portion	Period	Cortex	Material	Comments
4	405	1	Blade	Whole	-	-	vitreous light brown	Slight post-depositional edge damage
4	407	-	Core	Fragment	Neolithic	Mid brown	vitreous mid brown	Two striking platforms

3.2 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 41 sherds with a total weight of 811g. It comprised a mixture of medieval and post-medieval wares which indicate that there was a phase of activity at the site in the 12th century, and then another around the later 17th to early 18th centuries. The pottery was quantified using the chronology and coding system of the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (CTS), as follows:

F200: T1 (2) type St. Neots Ware, AD1000-1200. 1 sherd, 19g.

F307: Calcareous Reduced Ware, ?12th – 14th century. 3 sherds, 227g.

F330: Shelly Coarseware, AD1100-1400. 32 sherds, 491g.

F361: Potters Marston Ware, AD1100 – 1400. 1 sherd, 9g.

F407: Red Earthenwares, AD1550+. 1 sherd, 53g.

F409: Staffordshire Slipwares, AD1680-1750. 1 sherd, 7g.

F429: White Salt-glazed Stoneware, AD1720 – 1780. 1 sherd, 2g.

A single residual sherd of Romano-British Greyware (3g) was also noted. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 2. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The medieval assemblage comprises entirely unglazed jars and bowls, with common pottery types of the 13th century such as Potterspurty Ware entirely absent, suggesting that medieval occupation at the site was almost entirely limited to the 12th century. The stratified sherds are large and well-preserved, and there can be little doubt that there was medieval settlement in the immediate vicinity of these excavations. The presence of sherds in Calcareous Reduced Ware (F307) and Potters Marston Ware (F361) are worthy of comment. Both are fairly rare finds in the county, with the former possibly coming from a source to the west of Daventry, and the latter a typical find on sites in Leicestershire. Given the relative paucity of excavations in Daventry in recent years, this site would appear to have the potential to substantially enhance understanding of pottery use, and by extension, trade in Daventry in the medieval period.

The post-medieval assemblage is quite small, but indicates that here was activity at the site in the later 17th–early 18th centuries. Two of the sherds are from the more refined

end of the pottery spectrum, and are likely to have been used by some of the wealthier inhabitants of the area at the time.

Table 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	RB		F200		F330		F307		F361		F407		F409		F429		
Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
TP4	1	3	1	19	18	283					1	53	1	7	1	2	U/S
405					9	115	3	227	1	9							12thC
407					5	93											12thC
Total	1	3	1	19	32	491	3	227	1	9	1	53	1	7	1	2	

3.3 Iron knife by Tora Hylton

Part of an iron whittle-tang knife with single edged blade was recovered from context 407. The blade is complete, just a vestige of the square-sectioned tang survives, on to which a handle of wood, bone or horn would have been hafted. The tang is set below the back of the blade with a stepped shoulder and the back of the blade and the cutting edge taper to the tip. Stylistically this blade is medieval in date and such knives would have had any number of uses, but the presence of such a broad blade (Thickness 7-8mm) precludes its use for delicate work, the thickness of the blade would allow great pressure to be exerted on the knife, suggesting that it may have had a more specialised function. Measurements: Blade – length: 115mm, width: 22mm, thickness: 8mm

3.4 Environmental evidence by Karen Deighton

Introduction

Two samples were collected by hand during the course of excavation. This material was processed and assessed to determine the presence, preservation and nature of any ecofacts. The contribution to the understanding of the site and the potential for further sampling, should any future excavation take place, were also considered.

Method

The samples were processed using a modified siraf tank fitted with a 250micron mesh and flot sieve. The resulting flots and residues were dried. The flots were then sorted with the aid of a stereoscopic microscope (10x magnification) and residues were scanned. Any charred plant remains were identified with the aid of the author's small reference collection, Cappers *et al* 2006 and Jacomet 1996. The molluscs were identified with the aid of Glöer and Meier-Brook (2003) and Kerney and Cameron (1994) and the conchological society website.

Results

Preservation

Preservation of plant remains was solely by charring. Fragmentation and surface abrasion were low for all types of ecofacts recovered.

Taxonomic distribution

Table 3: Taxa by context

Cut/fill	405	407
Sample	1	2
Feature	Layer	Ironstone surface
Date	12th century	12th century
Volume(litres)	40	40
Charcoal	50	50
Spelt <i>Triticum spelta</i>	1	
Naked barley <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> var nudum		5
Hulled barley <i>Hordeum vulgare</i>	2	
Wheat/barley <i>Triticum/Hordeum</i>	11	9
Cereal indet.	9	32
Pulse	1	
Sheep sorel <i>Rumex acetocella</i>		1
Stinking mayweed <i>Cotula anthemis</i>	1	
Terrestrial taxa		
<i>Cepaea nemoralis</i>	2	1
<i>Helix aspersa</i>	1	
<i>Vertigo pygmaea</i>	42	31
<i>Pupilla muscorum</i>	49	
<i>Vallonia excentrica</i>		149
<i>Vallonia costarta</i>	110	3
<i>Discus rotundatus</i>	20	3
<i>Clausilia bidentata</i>	1	
<i>Cochlicopa lubrica/lubricella</i>	57	26
<i>Euconulus fulvus</i>	71	25
<i>Vallonia</i> sp		100
<i>Carychium</i> sp	17	6
<i>Trichia</i> sp	1	
Freshwater taxa		
<i>Anisus leucostoma</i>	3	1
<i>Bithynia</i> sp	2	
Indet . mollusc	200	

Discussion

The small amount of charred plant remains seen in both samples suggests their origin could be as “background”, i.e. material washed or blown in from activities taking place elsewhere. Alternatively it could represent the remains from activities taking place within the building (e.g. fuel burning for heating or cooking). The cereal types noted are common for the medieval period.

Four of the more numerous molluscan taxa (*V.pygmaea*, *V.excentrica*, *V.costarta*, *P.muscorum*) prefer dry, open, calcareous habitats including, in some instances, stone walls. Conversely *D.rotundatus*, *C.lubrica/lubricella* and *E.fulvus* are catholic in moderately damp habitats. The molluscan assemblage could be indicative of the extremely localised micro-environment created by the 12th century building, for example dry areas on the stones of the building and sheltered moist pockets of ground in the shadow of the building.

Potential

Ecofacts were recovered from both samples, their presence and reasonable level of preservation suggests that further sampling should not be ruled out should any further excavation take place. The fact that well preserved identifiable ecofacts are present indicates that further sampling of suitable phaseable/dateable contexts could result in the recovery of material that could aid the understanding of the site and its environment.

Conclusion

Assessment has shown a range of well preserved ecofacts which provide some information about the immediate environment of the site and possibly hint at activities taking place nearby. Some potential for further sampling is indicated.

4 DISCUSSION

The evaluation has demonstrated that archaeology is present in the eastern part of the site in Trench 4. Two residual flints dating from the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age and a residual sherd of Roman grey ware were recovered from Trench 4 suggesting that there was background activity from these periods in the area.

The main features uncovered related to a 12th-century structure, from the limited area of excavation it was not possible to indicate the size or form of the building, the presence of a post pad and the absence of any indication of stone walls would suggest that it had a timber frame. The pottery evidence would suggest that the building had a domestic function, as would the presence of a knife. Whether the building was in isolation or formed part of a previously unknown northern suburb or frontage to Welton Road was not clear. The pottery evidence would suggest that the building went out of use in the 12th century. Historically the area has been in the northern area of the open field system of Daventry.

No archaeological features were present in the other three trenches excavated, although the presence of ridge and furrow earthworks and a probable headland were noted in the northern part of the site.

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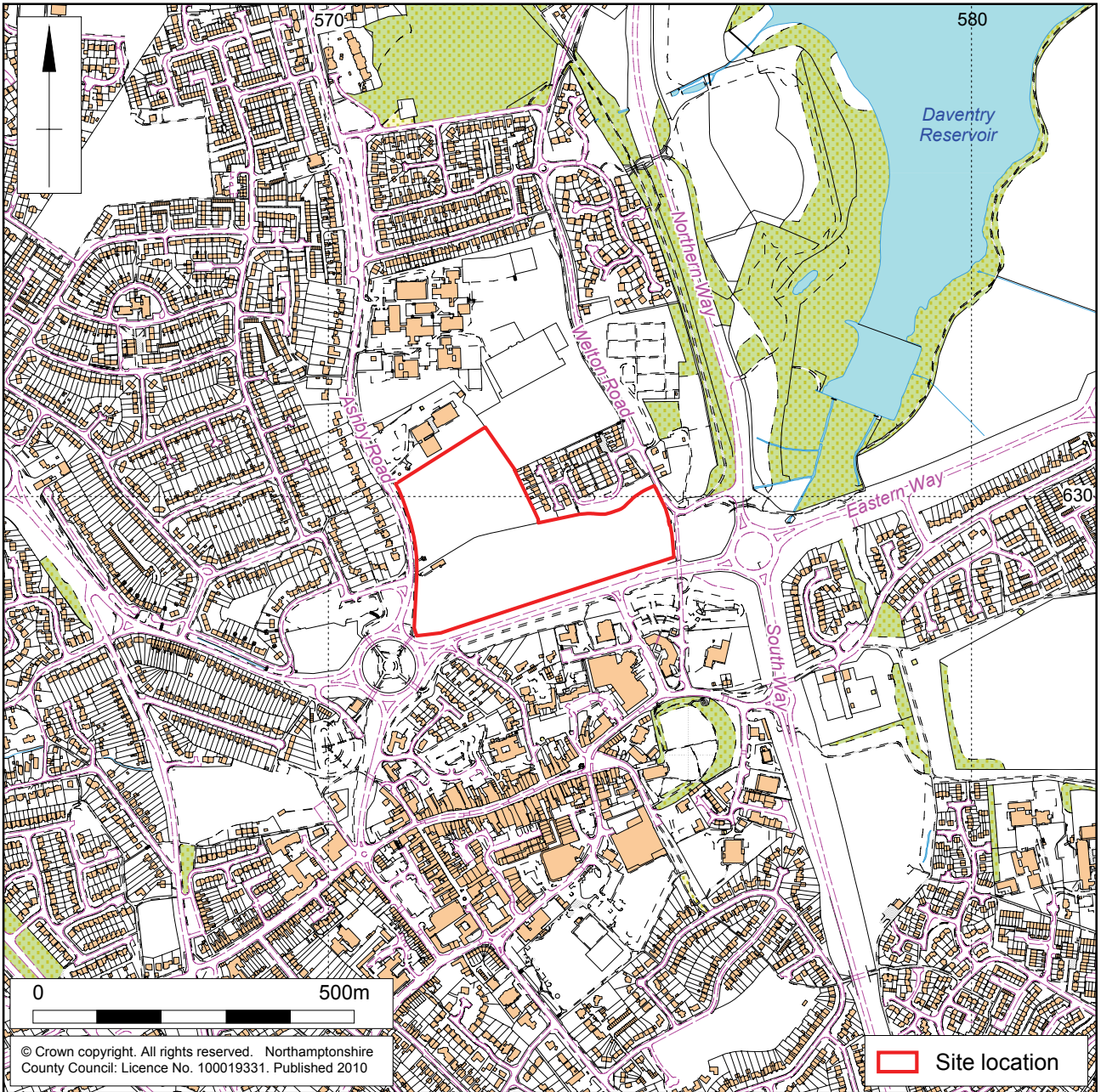
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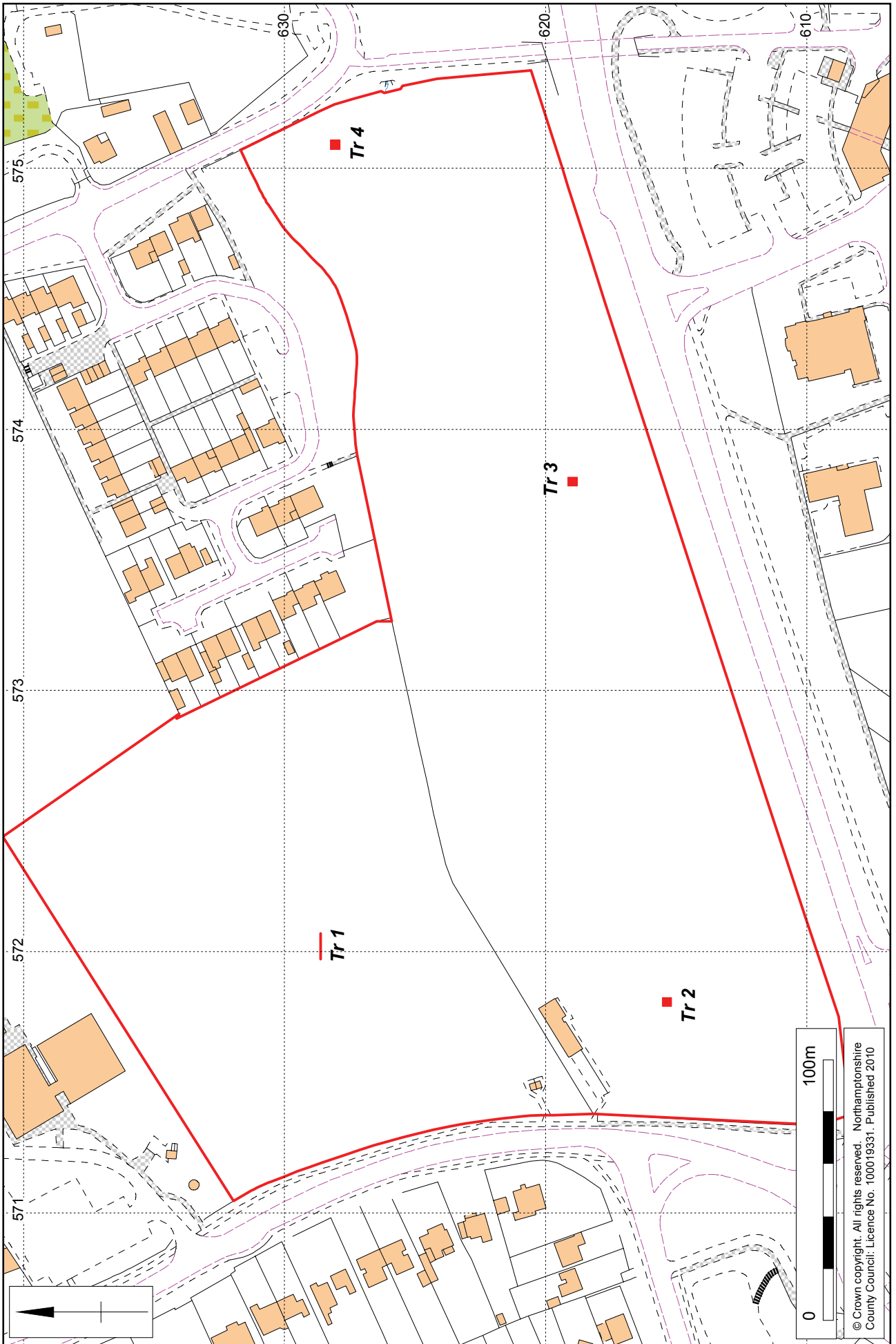
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
1	10m x 2m E-W			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey friable loam	0.15m thick	
102	Subsoil	red-brown loam l	0.4m thick	
103	Natural	red clay marl		
Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
2	5m x 5m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey friable loam	0.12m thick	
202	Subsoil	clean buff clay alluvial layer	0.6m thick	
203	Natural	Blue-grey clay and peat		
Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
3	5m x 5m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey friable loam	0.15m thick	
302	Subsoil	brown-buff silty clay	0.2m thick	
303	Natural	clean buff clay		
Trench No	Length, width & alignment			
4	5m x 5m			
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
401	Topsoil	Mid brown clay loam	0.14m thick	
402	Subsoil	light brown clay loam t	0.10m thick	
403	Alluvial layer	Slightly gritty light brown silty clay, with occasional water worn pebbles	0.10m thick	
404	Alluvial layer	Slightly gritty light grey-brown silty clay, with occasional water worn pebbles	0.10m thick	
405	Layer	orange-brown silty clay		Residual flint, pot/Sample 1
406	Natural	buff clay		
407	Surface	Ironstone rubble surface		Residual flint, pot, iron knife (SF3)/Sample 2
408	Post-pad	Post-pad		
409	VOID			
410	Floor	Dark brown-grey clay with occasional thin mortar patches		



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

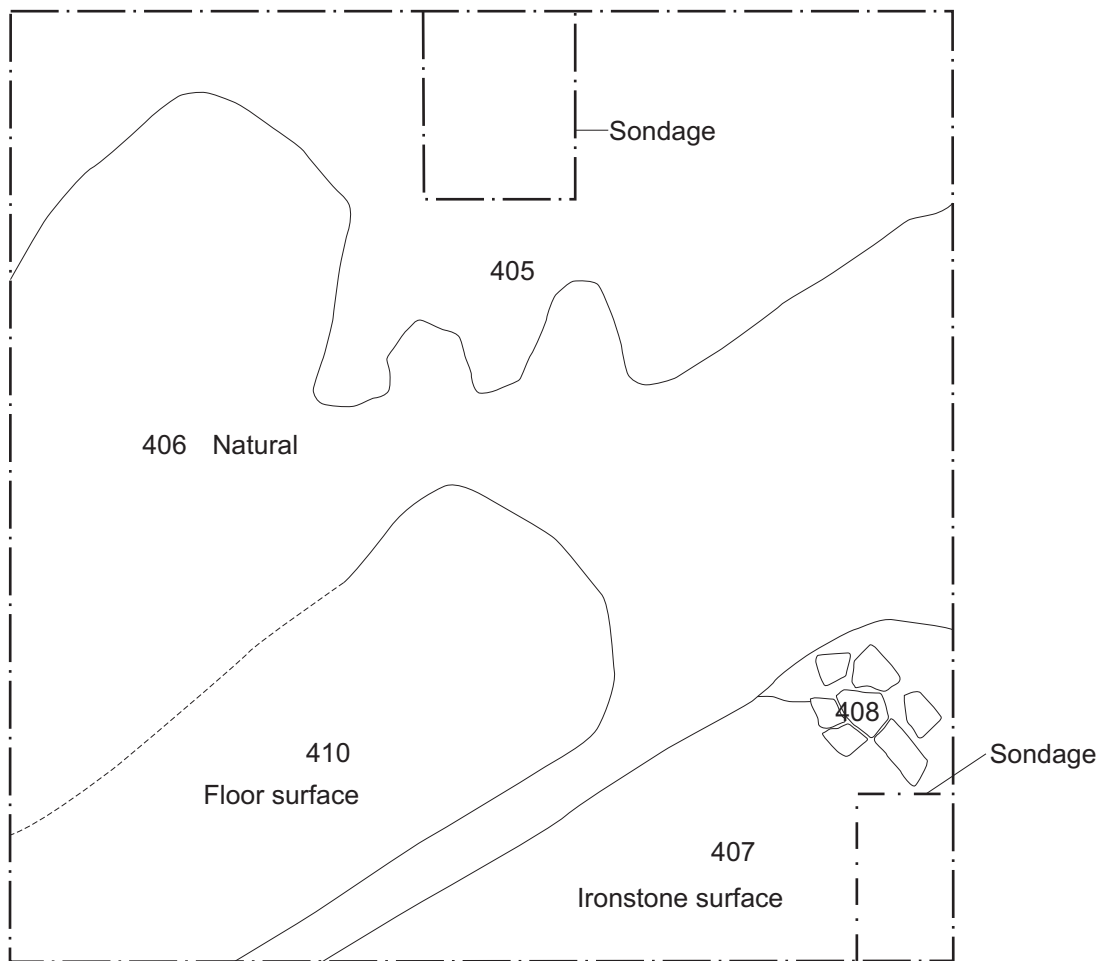


Scale 1:2000

Trench location plan Fig 2



Trench 4





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