Northamptonshire Archaeology

Medieval settlement at High Street Houghton Conquest, Bedfordshire

Accession No: BEDFM.2009.50

Northamptonshire Archaeology
2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822
e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk
w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk

Northamptonshire County Council

Charlotte Walker

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STAFF

Project Manager	Adam Yates BA AIfA
Text	Charlotte Walker BSc AIfA
Fieldwork	Anthony Maull Cert Arch, Jim Burke, Jonathon Elston BA, Lazlo Lichtenstein MA, Adrian Adams, David Haynes, Angela Warner BSc Hons
Saxon and medieval pottery	Paul Blinkhorn Btech
Ceramic building material	Pat Chapman BA CMS AIfA
Slag	Andy Chapman BSc MIfA FSA
Other finds	Tora Hylton
Roman coin	Ian Meadows BA
Faunal remains and charred seed	Karen Deighton BA MSc
Metal detecting	Steve Critchley BSc MSc
Illustrations	Charlotte Walker and Amir Bassir BSc

QUALITY CONTROL

P	rint name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified by	Anthony Maull		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Medieval settlement at High Street, Houghton Conquest, Bedfordshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	In August-Septe mber 200 9, an archaeological excavation w as undertaken b y Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of Bloor Homes, on land at High Street, Houghton Con quest, Bedfordshire in advance of development. Late Saxon settlement comprised linear boundar y ditc hes, providing evidence for plot formation. A small structure may have been a shelter related to iro n smelting. The boundary plots were retained u ntil the mid-12th or mid-13th centuries althoug h there was little evidence of inte nsive oc cupation. How ever, an almost complete copper bowl dating to the 12t h or 13th centuries was fo und in a p it to the rear of the plots.The excavation of the moat was not required so there is no definitive date for its construction. Based on th e evol ution of th e surrounding landscape it may have been dug between the mid 12th and mid 1 3th centuries. Within the moate d enclosure the boundar y ditches w ere pa rtially e xtant until at lea st the mid-14th century. There was a building perhaps re lated to small-scale iron smelting and smithing. Subse quently a structu re of sill-beam c onstruction w as built and later a stone building was constructed in the mid-late 15th century in the same location. It is unclear whether the mo at was still open at this date. The site had been levelled by the mid-16th century and has been pasture since.	
Project type	Archaeological excavation	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (Bourn 2004), trial trench evaluation (NA 2004)	
Current Land use	Housing	
Future work	No	
Monument type/ period	Late Saxon settlement; medieval moated site	
Significant finds	12th-13th century copper bowl	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County Bedfords	hire	
Site address	High Street, Houghton Conquest	
Study area	1785m^2	
OS Easting & Northing	TL 0117 6708	
Height OD	65m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation Northam	ptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	BCCHES	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor Anthon	y Maull	
Project Manager	Adam Yates	
Sponsor or funding body	Bloor Homes	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	August 2009	
End date	September 2009	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Content**
Physical	BEDFM.2009.50	Pottery, bone, tile, slag, small finds
Paper	BEDFM.2009.50	Site rec ord (conte xt she ets, drawings, photographs etc)
Digital	BEDFM.2009.50	Photographs, digital reports
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
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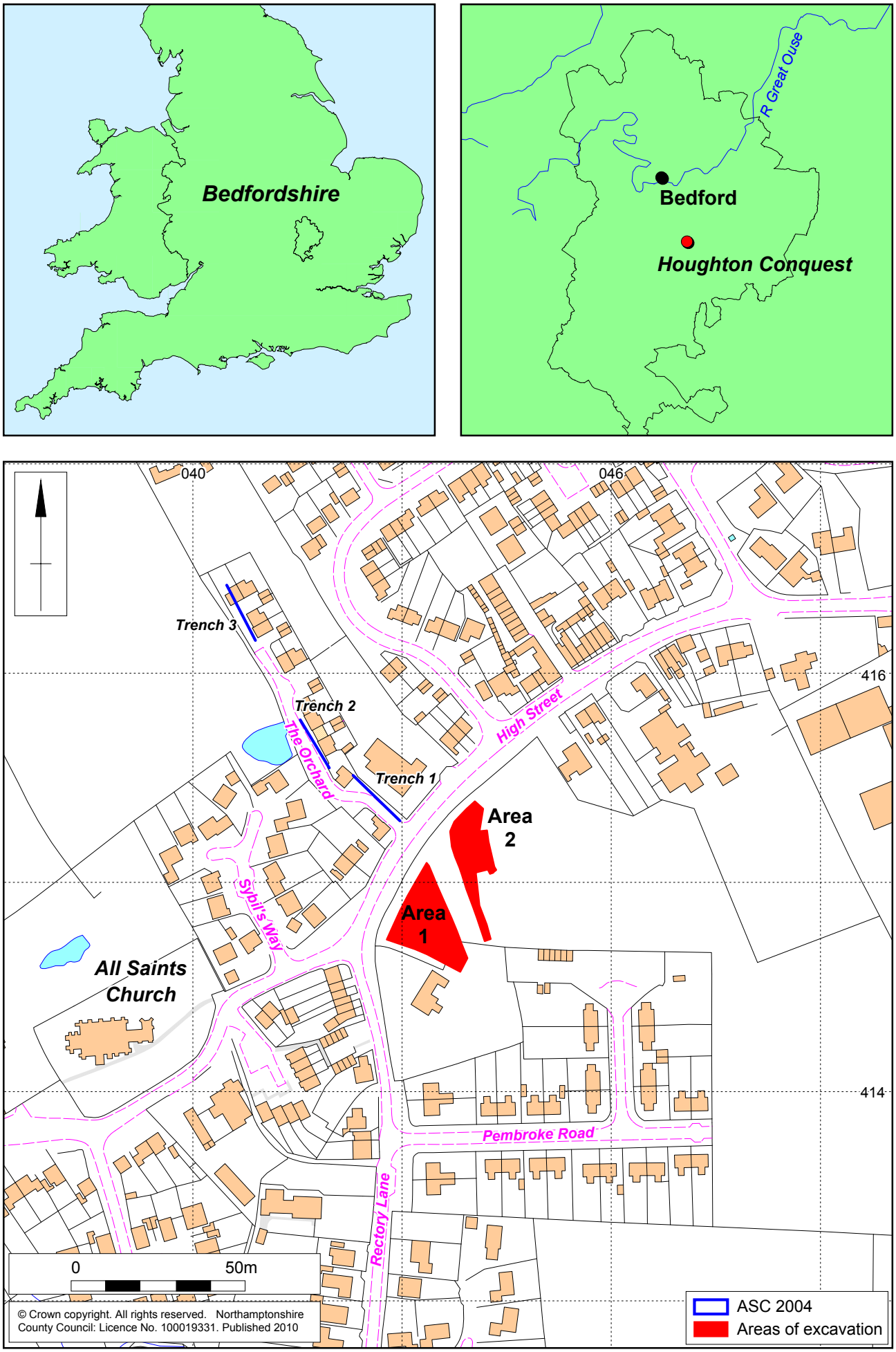


Scale 1:2500

Site Location Fig 1

MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT AT HIGH STREET

HOUGHTON CONQUEST, BEDFORDSHIRE

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2009

ACCESSION NO: BEDFM.2009.50

Abstract

In 2009, an archaeological excavation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of Bloor Homes, on land at High Street, Houghton Conquest, Bedfordshire in advance of development.

Late Saxon settlement comprised linear boundary ditches, providing evidence for plot formation. A small structure may have been a shelter related to iron smelting. The boundary plots were retained until the mid-12th or mid-13th centuries although there was little evidence of intensive occupation. However, an almost complete copper bowl dating to the 12th or 13th centuries was found in a pit to the rear of the plots.

The excavation of the moat was not required so there is no definitive date for its construction. Based on the evolution of the surrounding landscape it may have been dug between the late 12th to early 14th centuries. Within the moated enclosure the boundary ditches were partially extant until at least the mid-14th century. There was a building perhaps related to small-scale iron smelting and smithing. Subsequently a structure of sill-beam construction was built and later a stone building was constructed in the mid-late 15th century in the same location. It is unclear whether the moat was still open at this date. The site had been levelled by the mid-16th century and has been pasture since.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Bloor Homes to undertake archaeological excavation in advance of housing development at High Street, Houghton Conquest, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 0117 6708; Fig 1).

The proposed development is sited in an area of archaeological interest; within the historic core of the village, in an area containing earthworks recorded as part of a medieval moat (HER 3391). The site was subject to a desk-based assessment by CgMs Consulting (Bourn and Chadwick 2004) which concluded that the moat was likely to extend into the site. Subsequent trial excavation by Northamptonshire Archaeology (2004) confirmed the presence of the medieval moat, and the evidence suggested an area of settlement within the interior of the moat, and cultivation to the east. A late post-medieval building was found in the central part of the site.

Consequently, Bedfordshire County Council Heritage and Environment Section (BCCHES) advised that a condition be applied to the consent for planning, requiring that a programme of archaeological investigation should be carried out prior to the development of the land (BCCHES 2008). The archaeological background, mitigation strategy and specification for archaeological excavation were set out in the *Scheme of Archaeological Resource Management* (SARM) prepared by NA (2009).

The *Scheme of Archaeological Resource Management* identified three specific areas of archaeological importance affected by the development (Fig 2):

- AAS1: Medieval moat and associated occupation in the western part of the site
- AAS2: Medieval field system and cultivation in the eastern part of the site
- AAS3: Post-medieval building in the central part of the site.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

The proposed development area is located in the centre of the village of Houghton Conquest, which is between Bedford *c* 8km to the north and Ampthill *c* 5km to the south. The site comprises flat pasture land at a height of 65m above Ordnance Datum. The site is bounded to the north-west by the High Street, by further pasture to the east and a small residential estate to the south, including The Limes, in the garden of which the southern and part of the eastern arms of the moat are located (Fig 1).

Houghton Conquest lies on the northern edge of the Greensand Ridge, which extends north-east to south-west through Bedfordshire and parts of Cambridgeshire and Buckinghamshire. The geology of the site consists predominantly of Oxford Clay and Kelloway Beds (bgs.ac.uk/geoindex). The soils are of the Evesham 3 Association comprising '*slowly permeable calcereous clayey, and fine loamy over clayey soils. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged non-calcareous clayey soils'* (SSEW 1984).

2.2 Archaeological and historical background

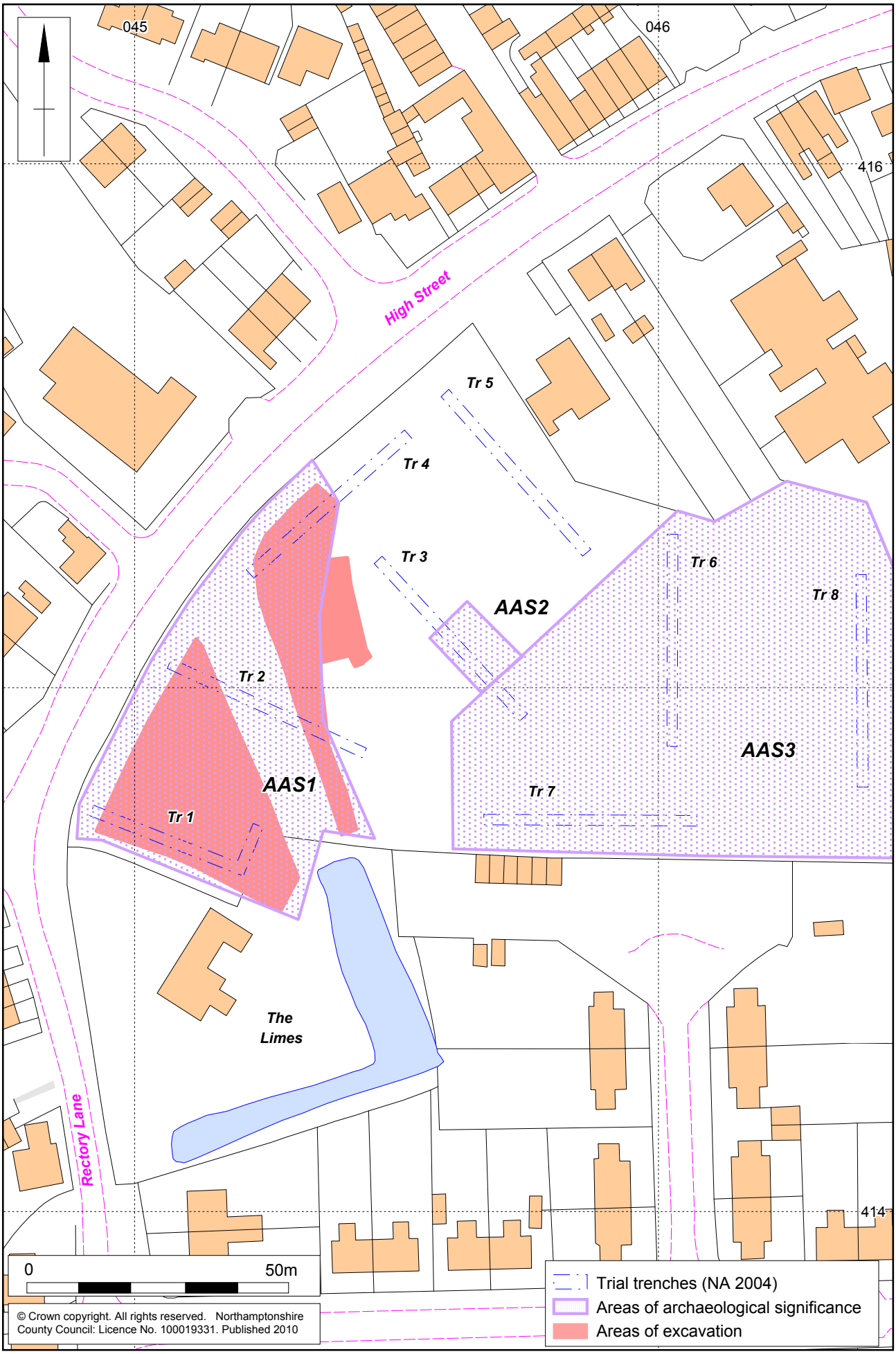
At Domesday, Houghton Conquest was known as Houstone, and Countess Judith, Adeliza, the wife of Hugh de Grantmesnil, and Hugh de Beauchamp held land in the parish.

In Houstone Hugh holds five hides. There is land for six ploughs, and there are [six ploughs], and eight villans and six bordars and two slaves, meadow for six ploughs, [and] woodland for 200 pigs. It is and was worth 100s; TRE (Tempore Regis Edwardi) £7. Seven sokemen held this manor and could give it to whom they wished.

In Houstone Hugh holds half a hide of Countess Judith. There is land for one plough, and there is [one plough], and two bordars, and woodland for 25 pigs. It is and was worth 10s; TRE 12s. Leofsige, a man of Earl Tosti, held this land and could give and sell it to whom he wished.

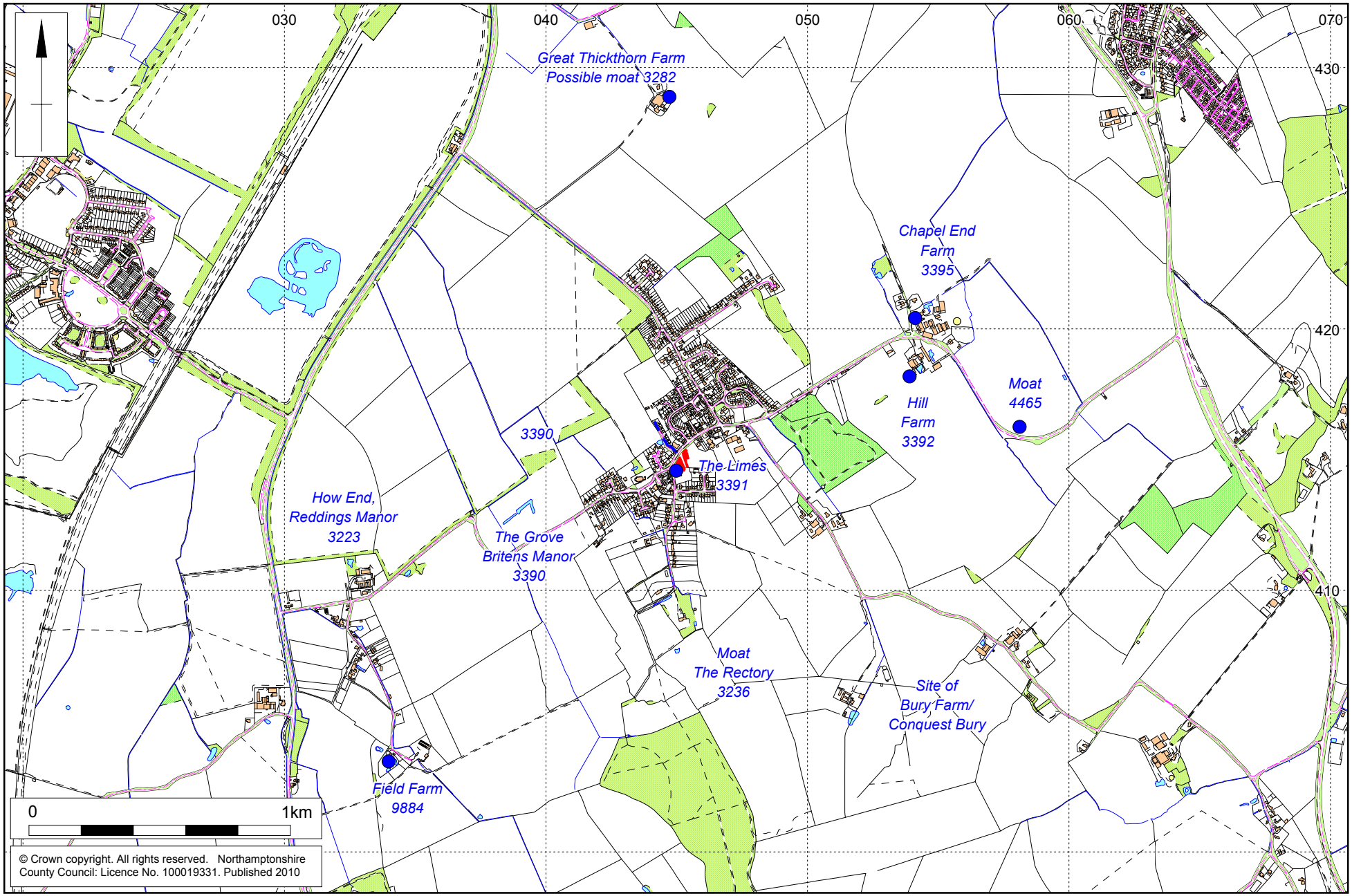
In Houstone Arnold holds of Adeliza four and a half hides as one manor. There is land for six ploughs. In demesne [are] two ploughs; and eleven villans and seven bordars with three and a half ploughs, and there can be a half [-plough] more. There are three slaves, meadow for two ploughs, [and] woodland for 225 pigs. Of this land one sokeman holds one hide. It is worth £4; when received, 60s; TRE £8. Three sokeman held this manor who wished [sic] to give and sell their land. In this same [vill] the aforesaid Adeliza claims half a virgate and 30 acres of both woodland and field against Hugh de Beauchamp; and the men of the hundred bear testimony that this land TRE belonged with the other land which Adeliza holds and who held this land could give or sell it to whom he wished. Ralph took possession of this land unjustly when he was sheriff.

Countess Judith is supposed to have held half a hide in the parish, but also held a further ten in the adjoining parish of Kempston. However, much of the land that was apparently in Kempston seems to have later been adjudged to be part of the vill of Houghton (VCH 1912). It is this property that is thought to descend to the Conquest family, whose seat was Conquest Bury, which was occupied by Bury Farm just over 1km to the south-east of the site. James I stayed here for two nights in 1605. There are a further five manors within Houghton Conquest. Of those, four (Dame Ellensbury, Britens alias Groves, Flamwells and Houghton Grange manors) originated in the five hides of land that Hugh de Beauchamp held in Houghton in 1086, which was later broken into smaller holdings. The fifth, How End or Reddings manor had its origin in a portion of the four and a half hides held by the wife of Hugh Grantmesnil in 1086.



Scale 1:1000 Location of trial trenches and areas of archaeological significance Fig 2

Scale 1:20,000



Historic Environment Record information for medieval moats Fig 3

Large areas of woodland are recorded by the Domesday Survey; an area capable of feeding 450 pigs was extant in 1086. Although the exact area required to feed a pig is unknown it must have been at least an acre per pig, perhaps as much as one and a half acres. This equates to about 450 to 650 acres of woodland in the parish; but by the beginning of the 20th century only 80 acres were left in the parish. Extensive clearance of woodland was taking place in the centuries after 1086; this was linked to the rapid growth of population and the need to cultivate former areas of woodland and waste. This process of assarting is linked to the construction of moated sites; the implication being that a secure site for occupation was required on newly cleared land (Lewis *et al* 1997).

There are a total of nine moated sites recorded in Houghton parish within the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record, although some of these may be spurious (Fig 3). Very little is known about the history of most of the moated sites, including the one currently under investigation. Only two can be reliably associated with the historical manors. The moat south-west of Chapel End, was a moated grange belonging to Chicksands Priory (HER 3392) and the moat at How End, was How End or Reddings Manor, granted to Reading Abbey in the 12th or 13th century (HER 3223). The Limes is the only moat that lies within the village, a location that is generally assumed to have surrounded a manor house and functioned both defensively and as an assertion of social superiority (Lewis *et al* 1997).

It is possible that the moat to the west of the site (HER 3390) was Britens Manor as this area was known as *The Grove* in the 19th century; the other name for the manor being *Groves*. It was said that Francis Clerke lived here in the 16th century and that parchmarks relating to the former buildings could still be seen in the 19th century (Houfe 2004). The field to the east of the moat is known as Dovehouse Close in the early 19th century. The location of Dame Ellensbury's Manor is also not certain. A portion of the manor's woodland was inclosed in the new royal park in Ampthill in the south of the parish and Sir William Gascoigne is found complaining about it in 1534 and 1537 to the king. A portion of the park was granted to Mary Countess of Pembroke in 1615 by James I. She created Houghton House and the surrounding estate, which was known as Houghton Park or Dame Ellensbury Park.

Previous archaeological work

Previous evaluation at this site has included an earthwork survey and trial trench evaluation concentrating on the part of the monument located within the garden of The Limes to the south (Albion Archaeology 2004) and a pre-determination evaluation of the current site including desk-based assessment (Bourn and Chadwick 2004) and trial trench evaluation (NA 2004). Albion Archaeology's earthwork survey served to reliably define the southern and south-eastern arms of the moat, which had been obscured by relatively recent fly-tipping. It also identified the traces of a suspected moat 'platform' and an earth mound. The trial trenching confirmed the moat was a substantial feature, over *c* 6.0m wide and 1.5m deep. However, the moat fills were all modern in origin. The 'platform' had been landscaped and was devoid of archaeological features and the earth mound was proved to be modern in origin.

Subsequent trial trenching by Northamptonshire Archaeology (2004) focussed on the presumed northern continuation of the eastern arm of the moat (Fig 2). It defined the edges of the moat and, although only the uppermost fills were investigated, the earliest of these contained medieval pottery largely dating to the mid 14th to 16th centuries, suggesting the initial disuse silting of the moat remained undisturbed. There was evidence of medieval occupation both inside and outside the moated enclosure, although that on the outside typically dated from the Saxo-Norman to 12th centuries, while the features in the interior dated from the mid-14th to mid-16th centuries. The eastern part of the site seems only to have been used for cultivation during the medieval and post-medieval periods, with the remains of two periods of agricultural use.

A watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of geotechnical test pits; due to the small size of the pits little could be discerned, however, moat fills were observed in all of them (Fig 11; Jones 2009). An intermittent watching brief was also maintained during the initial stages of the development whenever the area of the moat was disturbed. However, the groundworks were not deep enough to disturb the upper moat infill layers.

A trial evaluation was undertaken on land at 3 High Street prior to development (now known as The Orchard; Fig 1). Three trenches were excavated due to the proximity of the moated site and no archaeological features or artefacts were found in any of them(Fell 2004). It was evident that some truncation had taken place which probably destroyed the more shallow features, but any deeper features, such as the moat, would have survived, implying that the moat did not extend into this area.

3 OBJECTIVES

The general aims of the Scheme were as follows:

- To put into place a series of measures to mitigate impact of the development upon the archaeological resource
- To ensure the preservation *in situ* of those archaeological remains which will not be directly impacted by the development
- To set down a series of principles to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are enacted if unforeseen impacts arise during the design and construction process.

The main archaeological objective of the works was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological resource in its cultural and environmental setting. Appropriate research frameworks are set out in Edgeworth (2007a and 2007b).

The national framework for research is set out by English Heritage (1997). The broad research frameworks for the eastern counties of England are set out in Brown and Glazebrook (2000) while that of Bedfordshire is assessed in Oake *et al* (2007). The Research Aims set out in these documents will be addressed by the project, particularly those outlined in Chapters 5 and 6 of Oake *et al* (2007) pertaining to the medieval and post-medieval periods in Bedfordshire, and moated sites of that county in particular.

The specific aims of the project were to:

- Determine closely the date and chronological sequence of the medieval remains present, and identifying phases of activity
- Determine patterns of spatial distribution and organisation of the site. In particular, identifying how the occupation remains relate to the moat itself
- Establish how the moated site relates to the surrounding pattern of agricultural land use, village layout and road pattern (Edgeworth 2007a, 100)
- Determine whether there is any evidence for continuity of use of the moated site into the post-medieval period (Edgeworth 2007b, 123)
- To examine how the process of post-medieval enclosure impacted on the open field system represented by the medieval cultivation remains on site (Edgeworth 2007b, 121)
- Establish how the origins and development of the site, similar moated sites, and Houghton Conquest itself fits into a local, regional and national context.

The subsequent assessment and updated project design (Walker 2010) demonstrated that the excavation produced sufficient evidence to attend to some of the original research objectives. However, the excavation results have not definitely confirmed the presence of a manorial moated site and, for this reason, some of the objectives cannot be fully answered.

In the light of the excavation and subsequent assessment, the original generic research objectives were revised and specific aspects of past social, cultural and economic activity associated with the archaeological remains on the site were focussed on. With reference to regional research frameworks (Brown and Glazebrook 2000 and Oake *et al* 2007), these revised research objectives were as follows:

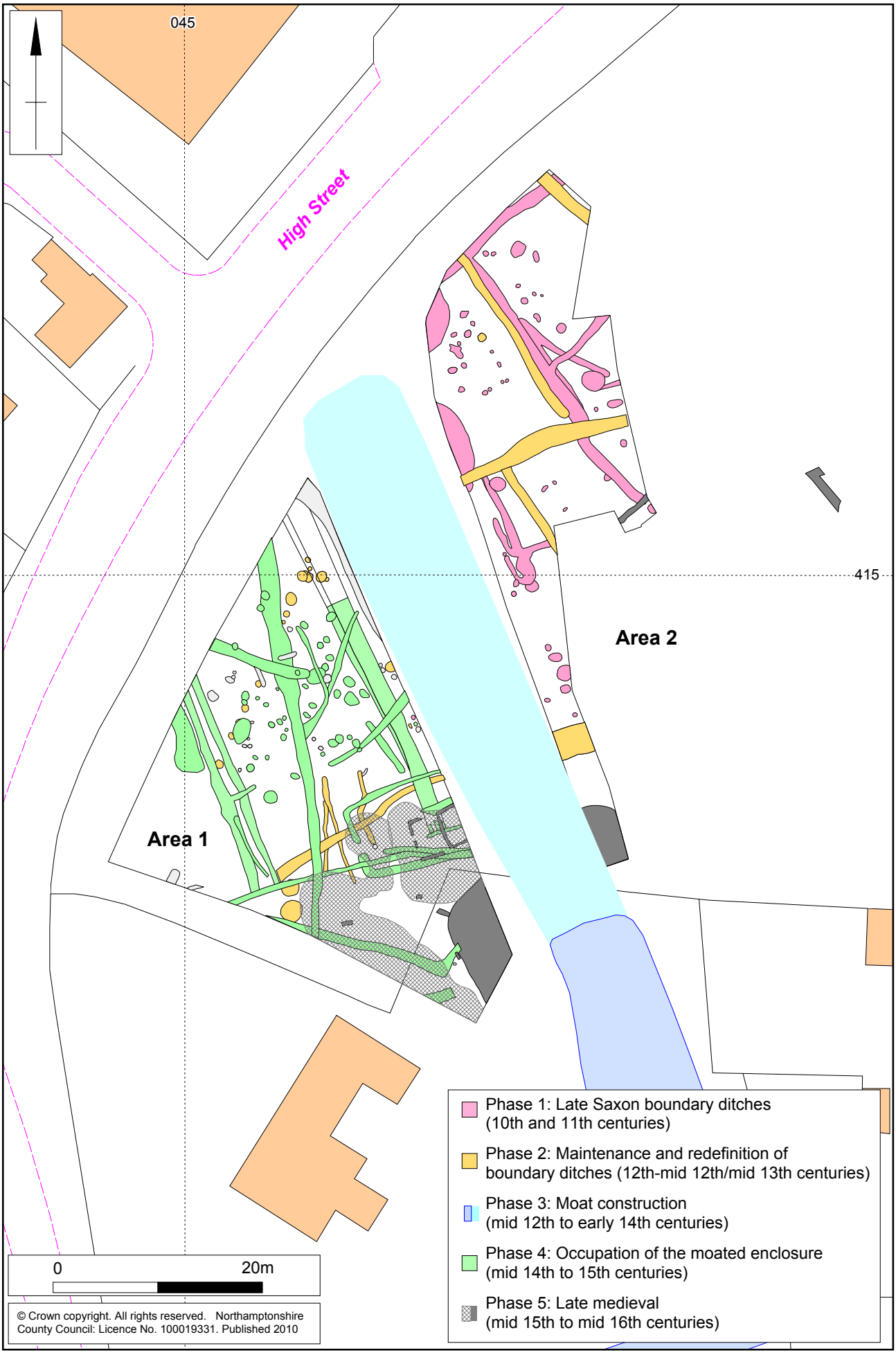
- Characterise the Saxon settlement remains and relate them to the pattern of late Saxon settlement in the village
- Define the distribution of pottery, in particular that from the 10th/11th centuries within Area 1
- Attempt to refine the pottery dating for the 12th and 13th centuries to more precisely date the creation of the moat.

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Two areas (Areas 1 and 2) totalling 1785m^2 were identified for excavation (Figs 1 and 5). They were located either side of the eastern arm of the medieval moat, which will be preserved *in situ* in open space within the development. The areas were laid out and then stripped under archaeological supervision by a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig 4). The topsoil, subsoil and non-structural post-medieval and later deposits were removed to reveal significant archaeological remains or, where absent, the natural substrate. The topsoil and subsoil were moved to the edge of the site in wheeled dumper trucks and stored separately in temporary bunds.

Area 1 under excavation, looking south-west Fig 4

Once stripped, the exposed areas were cleaned sufficiently to enhance the archaeological features, the site was planned at a scale of 1:50, a site grid was established and the site was surveyed by GPS. A temporary site datum was also set up and related to the Ordnance Survey Datum. All sectioned features were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 and recorded on proforma sheets.



Scale 1:500

General site plan Fig 5

A unique context number was allocated to each distinct deposit and feature. The excavation followed standard Northamptonshire Archaeology guidelines (NA 2006). Discrete features were half sectioned and where they were shown to form part of recognisable structures, represent significant activity, contain deposits of particular value or significant artefact or environmental assemblages, they were fully excavated. Non-structural linear features were sampled to 5% of their length, rising to 20% where they were shown to be associated with settlement, industrial structures or area specific activity.

Soil samples were taken for flotation from suitable contexts with a potential for the recovery of charcoal and carbonised plant remains.

The site and the spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to maximize artefact retrieval.

A full photographic record comprising both 35mm monochrome negatives, with associated prints, and colour transparencies was maintained, together with digital photography.

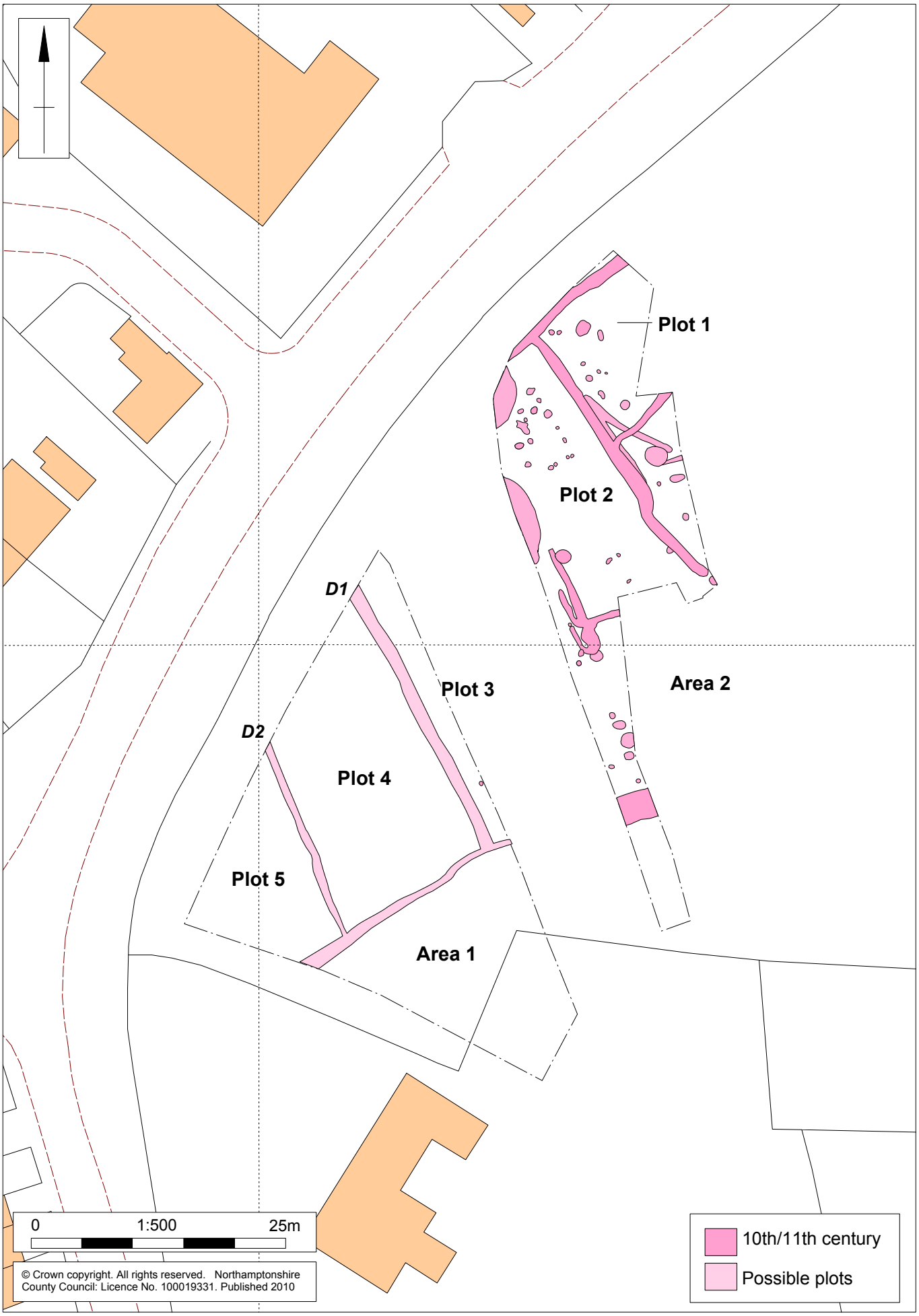
All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (IfA 1995, revised 2008) the *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2001, revised 2008) and the *Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists* (IfA 1985, revised 2009).

5 EXCAVATION RESULTS

5.1 Site chronology

Phase (Fig 5)	**Description**
Roman	Roman finds from later deposits
Phase 1: Late Saxon boundary ditches (10th-11th centuries)	A series of rectilinear boundaries forming a structured settlement. Finds indicate localised iron smelting as well as nearby domestic buildings
Phase 2: Maintenance and redefinition of boundary ditches (12th-mid 13th centuries)	Redefinition of plot boundaries, limited domestic activity
Phase 3: Moat construction (mid 12th to mid 13th centuries)	Creation of moated enclosure
Phase 4: Occupation of moated enclosure (mid 14th-mid 15th centuries)	Activity is confined to the moated enclosure. Localised iron smelting within a shelter. Later construction of small building
Phase 5: Late medieval (late 15th-mid 16th centuries)	Construction of small stone building and cobbled yard. Demolition of building and abandonment of site

While there was no direct evidence of Roman activity on site, an early 4th century coin was recovered from a medieval ditch and two spoons were found in topsoil deposits, all indicating Roman settlement somewhere in the vicinity. Similarly, there was some possible early/middle Saxon pottery from one context, indicating activity in the vicinity.



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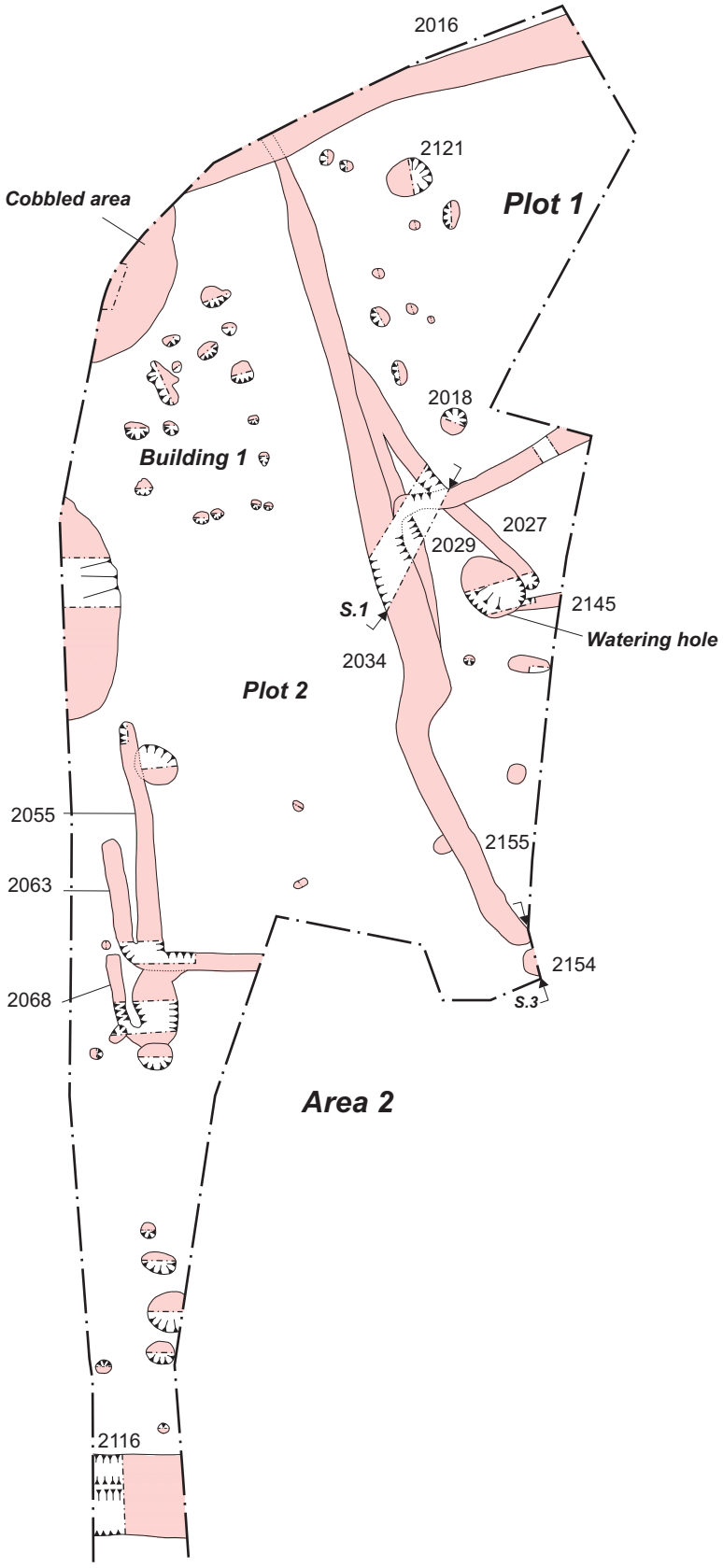
Phase 1: Late Saxon boundary ditches (10th and 11th centuries) Fig 6



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Area 2, plots 1 and 2, phase 1 Fig 7

5.2 Late Saxon and medieval settlement

Phase 1: Late Saxon boundary ditches

During the late Saxon period a number of boundary ditches were dug creating a series of regular plots along the south side of High Street (Fig 6). Up to five plots were visible within the excavation area, although further late Saxon ditches found during the earlier evaluation suggested the plot system extended eastwards (NA 2004).

In the central part of Area 2, a short length of ditch, [2027], aligned north-west to south-east and 0.50m wide and 0.19m deep, was largely truncated by later boundaries (Fig 7). Pottery from the ditch dated to the 10th century. The ditch terminated *c*0.7m to the north of a shallow gully, aligned east-west, [2145], which may date to the same period. Together they may have enclosed a small plot, suggesting some formalised division of land during this period. Further south there were a number of shallow pits, postholes and shallow gullies that also dated to this period.

A series of linear, parallel ditches were dug in the 11th century. In Area 1, these ditches were redefined and modified over the course of several centuries and the original Late Saxon features lost, although a substantial quantity of pottery dated to the 11th century was found in the later features. A large amount of residual St Neots Ware was found in one the earlier phases of D1, the easternmost plot boundary in Area 1 (Fig 6). There were further substantial deposits in surrounding features suggesting that there may have been a focus of activity in the south-western part of Plot 3 in the 11th century.

In Area 2, the early boundary ditches were to a large extent fossilised. At the northern edge of the area, ditch [2016], aligned north-east to south-west, was 1.4m wide and up to 0.68m deep and may have formed a boundary to the road (Fig 7). The fills of the ditch were fairly sterile silty clays with occasional small stones. There was some mottling of the primary fill indicative of seasonal waterlogging. Ditch [2034] formed a boundary aligned north-west to south-east at right angles to the road, possibly dividing adjacent plots. It was 1.52m wide and up to 0.56m deep with shallow edges and a narrow base. Although there was a moderate amount of cereal within the secondary fill of the ditch, the fills were generally sterile and similar to the subsoil. The ditch terminated to the south and appeared to be truncated by a further pit or ditch, [2157] (Figs 7 and 17, Section 3). There was also some indication that this ditch replaced an earlier one on the same alignment, [2029], indicating that this boundary was in use for a substantial period of time (Figs 7 and 17, Section 1).

A ditch, [2116], at the south of Area 2, at least 1.45m wide and 0.80m deep, aligned east to west, may have formed the rear boundary of the plots. The slightly stepped, shallow sides indicate that there was some recutting of the ditch, again indicating its longevity of use. A ditch found during the evaluation to the east of the site may be the continuation of this rear boundary, closely following the route of the High Street to the north (not illustrated). The boundary ditches appear to have formed the basis of a structured settlement layout created during the Late Saxon period, with the surviving plots creating a length of *c* 40m, or 8 rods.

There was a concentration of postholes and pits in the northern part of Plot 1 to the east of ditch [2034]. They were up to 0.90m wide and 0.46m deep, although only two, [2121] and [2018], were deeper than 0.20m. Only one of the postholes had any evidence of a post-pipe, although this may be a result of truncation. They may represent the partial remains of a building. Finds from this area are generally domestic in origin comprising pottery and bone. Pit [2121] was 0.90m wide and 0.46m deep with steep sides and a slightly concave base (Fig 8). The primary fill of the pit was 0.39m deep and comprised sterile mottled mid yellow-brown clay, very similar to the natural clays. The upper fill was only 0.07m deep but contained pot, bone and charcoal. A large pit to the rear of the possible building was 1.95m in diameter and 0.60m deep and may have functioned as a waterhole prior to silting up. Pottery from the primary and secondary fills of the pit dated

exclusively to the 10th and 11th centuries, while the upper fill of the pit contained pottery dating to the 12th-13th centuries suggesting it remained open for a substantial period.

Pit [2121], looking east Fig 8

At the front of Plot 2 lay a series of postholes forming a rectangle 7.8m long and 3.4m wide (Building 1; Figs 7 and 9). Most of the postholes had been truncated and were consequently very shallow, although one survived to a depth of 0.46m. There was no trace of any post-packing and in only one was there any trace of a post-pipe. A few of the postholes had been recut suggesting that there had been replacement of posts, indicating some longevity to the structure. At the north-western corner of the building there was a shallow, irregular depression containing quantities of tap slag. Tap slag and possible fragments of furnace lining were also found in surrounding postholes.

Building 1, looking north-west Fig 9

The presence of the tap slag suggests there was a smelting furnace here, the superstructure of which has been lost to later truncation; the postholes indicate the remains of a small, rectangular shelter perhaps relating to the metalworking. A cobbled layer to the north-west of the shelter may have provided a further working area.

In the southern part of Plot 2 there was a further concentration of features, all of them shallow, rendering many of the stratigraphical relationships indiscernible. A shallow gully, [2055], was aligned north to south and although fairly regular at the north became irregular and less well-defined to the south. The general alignment of the gully appeared to be continued to the south by a series of shallow pits (Fig 7). The amorphous nature of the features suggests they may be the remains of a former hedgeline, possibly being used as an internal division within the plot. Subsequently, there was an L-shaped gully [2063], which was 0.45m wide and 0.10m deep and may have formed the remains of a beam-slot. On the same alignment to the south, another shallow gully, [2068], was 2.2m long, 0.40m wide and 0.04m deep and may have also been the truncated remains of a beam-slot.

Phase 2: Maintenance and redefinition of boundary ditches (12th-mid 13th centuries) (Fig 10)

A considerable percentage of the 12th to mid 13th-century pottery was found in Area 1, but much of it was residual. The linear boundaries created during the Late Saxon period in Area 1 persisted into the 12th or 13th centuries, while the plots in Area 2 were abandoned by the late 12th century (Fig 10).

In the north of Plot 4, a north-east to south-west oriented line of postholes, 20m long, may have been a fenceline laid at an oblique angle to the plot boundaries (Fig 10). The postholes were intermittently spaced and it can be assumed that more were lost by later truncation. At both the south-western and the north-eastern end of the alignment, clusters of postholes indicate possible post replacement. There were a number of other small pits and postholes scattered across the area indicating sporadic activity.

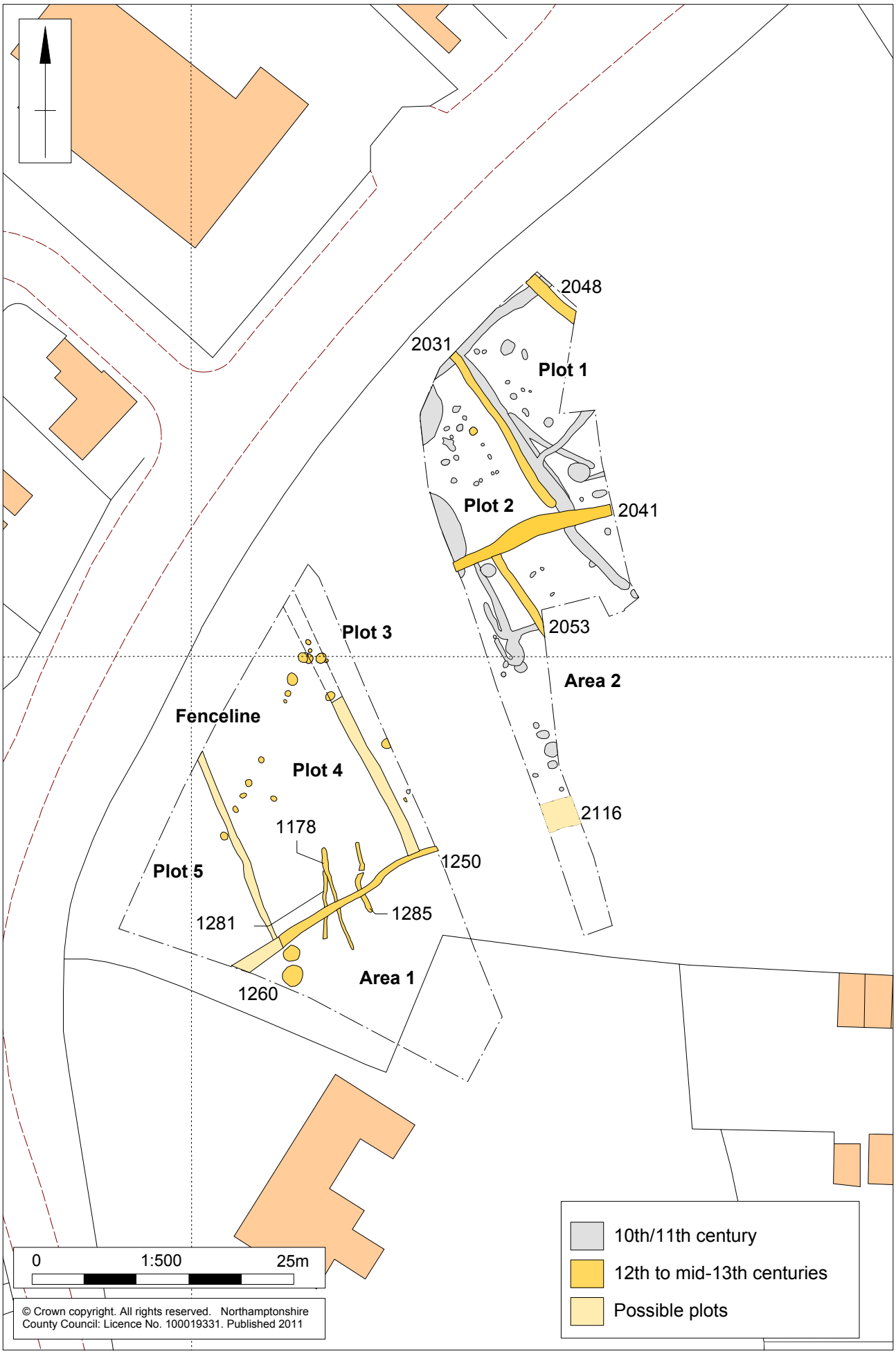
Also within Plot 4, lay three shallow, broadly parallel gullies, aligned north to south and up to *c*3.4m apart, which were up to 0.54m wide and 0.15m deep, [1178], [1281] and [1285]. They may have functioned as a form of funnel for livestock from the front to the rear of the plot. They were truncated by ditch [1250], which was 1.6m wide, 0.52m deep and aligned south-west to north-east (Fig 10). It appears to have been a continuation of ditch [2116] in Area 2, forming a rear plot boundary. At its eastern extent the ditch had steep sides with a flat base and an homogenous fill, while to the west it had more shallow sides perhaps indicating it had been recut. The sequence of fills was also more complicated. The primary and upper fills of the ditch were largely sterile, while the secondary fill contained large quantities of shelly and sandy wares.

A discrete pit, just outside the rear boundary of Plot 4, was 2.00m in diameter and 0.37m deep ([1260]; Fig 10). The profile of the pit was fairly irregular with shallow sides and an undulating base. A copper bowl (Fig 22) sitting in the base of the pit was surrounded by three large pieces of limestone, indicating deliberate deposition. The fills were composed of mottled orange-brown sandy clays. A lens of ashy material within the uppermost fill contained the largest deposit of charred grain found on site, probably largely comprising breadwheat. Pottery from the fill of the pit dated from 11th to mid-13th centuries. A further possibly contemporary pit lay 0.5m to the north, although it was truncated and devoid of finds.

In Area 2 there appeared to have been considerable continuity in settlement from the previous period with old boundaries being redefined and altered. The north-south boundary dividing Plots 1 and 2 was partially recut ([2031]; Fig 10). It terminated 0.90m to the north of an east-west ditch, [2041], which was up to 1.68m wide and 0.63m deep, and may have formed the rear boundary to the plots or a boundary between the tofts

and crofts to the rear. The narrow gap (*c* 0.6m*)* between the two ditches may have functioned as an access between plots. The eastern boundary of Plot 1 was ditch [2048], which was situated 10m, or 2 rods, from the western boundary. Assuming the Late Saxon rear boundary had been maintained the plot would have been about one tenth of an acre.

However, just a single posthole in Plot 2 dated to this period, otherwise Plots 1 and 2 were apparently devoid of activity, perhaps suggesting the main focus of settlement had already shifted elsewhere, prior to the eventual abandonment of this area by the late 12th century.



1:500 Phase 2: Maintenance and redefinition of boundaries (12th to mid 13th centuries) Fig 10

5.3 The medieval moated enclosure

Phase 3: Moat construction

As part of the strategy for the management of the areas of archaeological significance, the moat ditch has been protected *in situ* in open space within the development (Fig 5). The 11m-wide baulk between Areas 1 and 2 ensured the moat and overlying stratigraphy were undisturbed. However, this strategy meant no stratigraphical relationships between the moat and other features could be established. A firm date for the creation of the moat was not ascertained during either this excavation or previous evaluations (Albion 2004; NA 2004), although the earliest fills observed during the NA evaluation contained pottery dating to the mid-14th to 16th centuries.

No discernable activity was identified in Area 2 from the late 12th century onwards, and from the mid-13th century there appears to have been a hiatus in occupation in Area 1 for a century or so. Clearly, the landscape was being substantially re-organised at the end of the 12th century, the inhabitants either abandoning or being coerced to abandon the plots, presumably by the lord of the manor or land owner. Subsequently, from the mid-14th century onwards, there was a rapid increase in activity, but only in Area 1. There is no further activity to the east of the site, even beyond Area 2; the limited Late Saxon and 12th to 13th-century activity observed during the trial trench evaluation also appeared to have no later counterpart.

Therefore, the moat appears to have been created at some point during this 150 year interval, possibly in the early 14th century. This falls largely within the suggested height of moat construction, thought to lie between 1200 and 1325 (Jean Le Patourel and Roberts 1978). The upcast resulting from the excavation of the moat ditches was not spread over the moat interior as was often practised, to create a slightly higher, and presumably drier, central area. Although rare this has been noted at a number of other sites (Clarke 1986). This has further exacerbated the problems regarding the dating of the moat, since there was no clearly defined act sealing the earlier features and therefore providing a reliable *terminus post quem* for the construction of the moat.

Some caution must still be exercised, since the moat has not been fully investigated. There are numerous examples of L-shaped earthworks once thought to be the remains of moats, but were in fact fishponds, mill-ponds and later garden features among other things (Taylor 1978). The earliest map evidence for Houghton Conquest, dating to the early 19th century, shows the moat much as it exists presently (Fig 25).

Only parts of the southern and eastern arms of the moat at The Limes survived as earthworks and formed a corner with an angle of 90° (Fig 11). Internally the southern arm is 40m long and the northern arm is 38m long. The eastern arm of the moat was observed during the evaluation (NA 2004) and a later watching brief (Jones 2009) extending northwards, meaning the interior of the moat was at least 100m north-south. Nothing further is known of its plan but the regularity of the known parts of the moat suggests it may have been of square or rectangular form. However, this would necessitate that the road layout during the medieval period was substantially different and at present there is no evidence to suggest this. The alignment of the eastern arm of the moat corresponds with that of the earlier plot boundaries suggesting that the moat was inserted into the existing plot layout.

The southern arm of the moat was *c* 6m wide and 1.5m deep with shallow sides and a concave base (Albion Archaeology 2004). The eastern arm of the moat was investigated during the subsequent evaluation (NA 2004). The trial trench was located over the moat arm at an oblique angle, so while the moat appeared to be 16m wide in the trench its actual width is probably *c* 11m. The moat was not fully excavated but was at least 0.8m deep, with a sharp sloping side. The lowest excavated fills appeared to be less disturbed by modern activity and contained pottery dating to the 12th-16th centuries.

Phase 4: Occupation of the moated enclosure (mid 14th to 15th centuries)

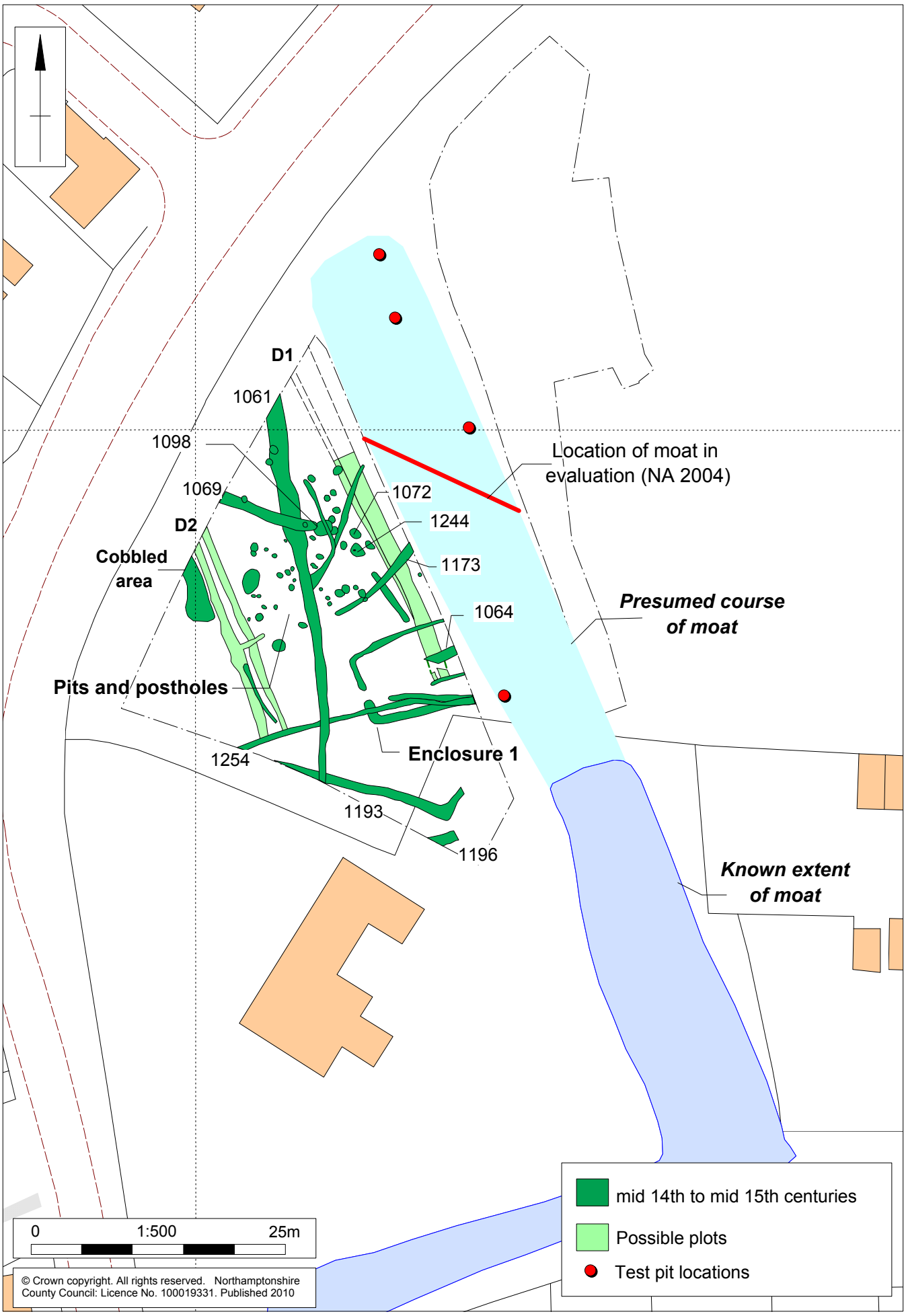
The former boundary ditches within the moated enclosure appear to survive until at least the mid-14th century (D1 and D2; Fig 11). Ditch Group D1 comprised a substantial ditch 1.5m wide and 0.9m deep with steep edges and a flat base [1186]. The primary fill was relatively sterile and formed from natural slumping. The secondary fill was very dark grey silty clay with dark green mottling indicating seasonal waterlogging of the feature. There was a considerable quantity of residual St Neot's ware in the fill as well as some Late Medieval Reduced Ware. There was a later, more shallow, recut of the ditch. At the north it had been cut directly into the top of the earlier ditch and was 1.08m wide and 0.24m deep. The boundary ditches became very indistinct at the north of the site, probably due to later disturbance.

Ditch Group D2 comprised two parallel ditches aligned south-east to north-west. The western ditch, [1034], was 0.89m wide and 0.30m deep with irregular sides and a flat base. The irregularity of the sides may be due to a later re-cut; the primary fill contained only pottery dating to the 12th to 13th centuries, while the upper fill contained pottery dating to the mid-14th to 15th centuries. The eastern ditch, [1031], was 0.79m wide and 0.25m deep with steep edges and a broad, flat base. A cobbled area to the west of the ditches appeared to be contemporary and was the only feature in the otherwise sterile area to the west of the boundary ditches.

A series of ditches may form a redefinition to the rear of the plot, but on slightly different alignments than the earlier boundary. The earliest, ditch, [1254], extended south-westwards across the site and was 0.65m wide and 0.46m deep (Figs 11 and 16). At the eastern edge of Area 1 two parallel ditches, east to west aligned and *c* 1.5m apart, appeared to terminate at the western edge of the D1 ditches. Ditch [1064] was at least 0.60m wide and 0.76m deep with steep sides and a narrow concave base (Fig 16). The upper fill of the ditch was particularly rich in artefacts, containing large quantities of charcoal and some cereal, bones of domestic fowl, tap slag and a piece of worked bone of a type that would have been used to tune instruments in the 13th/14th centuries. The ditch was sealed beneath the levelling layer (1152) laid prior to the construction of the later stone building. Ditch [1158] was at least 0.42m wide and 0.40m deep with similarly steep sides and narrow base (Fig 15). The upper fill of this ditch also contained a set of copper alloy tweezers, large quantities of charcoal and one of the largest deposits of cereal waste found on site. Pottery from the upper fill also included the lower part of a decorated jug of Bourne 'D' ware and sherds of Cistercian ware, both types of pottery dating as late as the mid 16th century and most likely intrusive elements from the later building or subsequent demolition.

Ditch Groups D1 and D2 may have been used to define an area dominated by pits and postholes. An irregular gully,[1173], up to 0.90mm wide and 0.38m deep, was aligned north-east to south-west and extended westwards towards the centre of Area 1 (Fig 11). It appeared to define the southern limit of the pits and postholes.

The area encompassed by D1, D2 and the gully was approximately rectangular in plan, 13m long and 10m wide. Although a clear building outline cannot be ascertained, more substantial postholes were clustered towards the western side of the area. They were up to 0.46m deep and most had vertical sides, but there were no examples with post-pipes and there were few associated finds.



1:500 Phase 4: Occupation of the moated enclosure (mid 14th to mid 15th centuries) Fig 11

The eastern part of the area was dominated by a series of pits rich in finds. A large pit, 1.65m in diameter and 0.55m deep, contained fragments of collapsed smelting furnace superstructure and furnace lining along with ferrous slag ([1098], Fig 11). Situated 2m to the south-west, another pit, [1072], 1.00m in diameter and 0.30m deep, contained 2.1kg of slag, the largest deposit on site. The slag was largely deposited in a central post-pipe, possibly indicating it was used as post-packing. Less than 0.50m to the south, pit [1244] contained large quantities of charcoal but only one fragment of slag, as well as a piece of antler (Fig 11). It is likely that an above-ground furnace lay nearby and that at least some of the postholes may be the remains of a protective shelter or related building. There was the skeleton of an adult cow in a shallow pit that cut gully [1173].

The plot boundary ditches were fully backfilled by the 15th century at the latest. A rectangular enclosure, 7.1m wide and at least 9.5m long internally, was created (Enclosure 1; Figs 11, 12 and 16). There was a single entranceway on the west side of the enclosure, 1.05m wide. The ditch was between 0.82m deep and 0.40m deep with steep sides and a flat base on the northern side, while to the south it was 0.90m wide and 0.18m deep, although this side had suffered much greater truncation from the later stone building. It is possible that it may be a structure of sill-beam construction or an enclosure surrounding a small building. The interior was largely truncated by a sewage pipe and later stone building and no obvious internal contemporary features survived. The building probably represented an ancillary structure some distance from the main areas of domestic activity.

Enclosure ditch 1 [1267] truncating earlier boundary ditch [1271] Fig 12

A ditch,[1061], aligned north to south which traversed the entire site may have been contemporary (Fig 11). It was at odds with the earlier boundary systems, although it is closely parallel with Rectory Lane as depicted in the 1808 Inclosure map (Fig 25). This could suggest possibly suggesting some reorganisation of the landscape in the later 15th century and may imply the moat had gone out use by this time. Further reorganisation seems to have occurred with the creation of ditches [1069], situated at the north of Area 1 and [1193], situated at the south; the latest features within this phase. Both were aligned north-west to south-east and they may have created an enclosed area off the High Street.

Ditch [1193] was up to 1.3m wide and at least 0.42m deep with shallow sides and a flat base. It appeared to turn at the south of the site towards the north-east, but was

truncated by the later pond. The primary fill was yellow-brown sandy clay containing shell, slag and pottery. The upper fill was much darker grey-black silty clay containing a large amount of occupation debris including charcoal, fired clay, tile, iron nails and bone. A small gully [1196], probably east to west aligned and situated to the south of [1193], may have been contemporary but only a short section was observed. Ditch [1069] was 1.2m wide and only 0.10m deep, although the northern end of the site appeared to be more deeply truncated.

5.4 Post-medieval land use

Phase 5: Late medieval activity (mid 15th to mid 16th centuries)

Although there were very few features dating to the mid-15th century and later the pottery assemblage from this period indicates a site of higher than normal status.

A stone building was constructed sometime after the mid-15th century, but it is not clear whether its construction represents further modifications/additions to buildings situated within the moat or building work that took place after the moat had gone out of use (Fig 15).

Initially, a levelling layer of clay was spread across the interior of the earlier enclosure (E1), effectively sealing all the earlier ditches and other activity and probably used to prevent later slumping (Fig 16). The foundations of the building lay entirely within the earlier structure, although somewhat off-centre, its southern wall lying directly over the southern ditch. The building was at least 4.7m long and 3.8m wide and consisted of at least two bays (Fig 15). However, the eastern end of the building lay beyond the limit of excavation and its exact size and relationship with the moat is uncertain. The exterior walls were of local greensand stone construction, 0.24-0.34m wide, comprising roughly squared and irregular stone bonded by yellow-brown sandy mortar. Much of the stonework, especially the western end wall, had been robbed. Limestone appeared to have been used to emphasise the corners of the building and possibly the location of a doorway at the south-eastern corner. An interior partition wall divided the building into two bays with a possible doorway in the centre. Flooring in the eastern bay, which measured 3.6m by 2.6m, comprised small blocks of local greensand stone set into a mortar bedding. The floor of the western bay appeared to comprise a beaten clay floor.

Abutting the building were the remains of possibly contemporary cobbled yard surfaces. Much of the pottery dating to this period was found in the cobbled surfaces, in particular layer [1177], which had partly slumped into the top of ditch [1193]. There were also several fragments of stone wall to the south of the building, although none are substantial enough to be resolved into buildings or wall-lines.

There was a layer of demolition material, [1148], within the eastern bay of the building that was largely composed of mortar as well as containing stone and roof tile (Fig 13); it contained pottery dating no later than the mid-16th century, including Cistercian ware, suggesting that the building had fallen out of use by this period. Pottery on the cobbled surfaces also dated to no later than the mid-16th century.

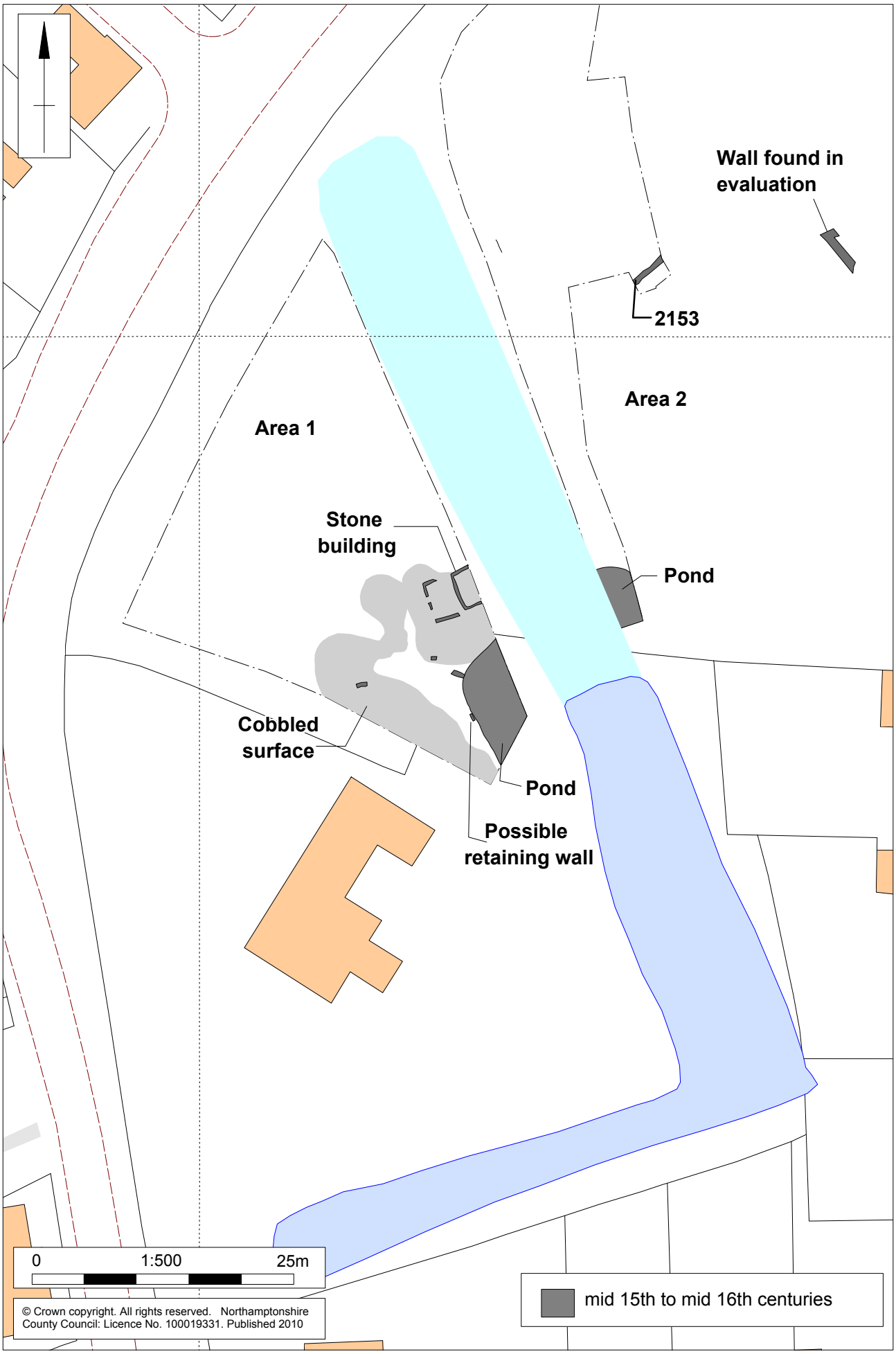
There was a layer of grey brown clay silt which extended over the southern and eastern parts of the moat interior as well as intermittently over parts of Area 2. The layer sealed all the archaeology and contained large quantities of tile. The layer appears to represent final clearance of the site before it reverted to pasture.

Area 1 looking south-west, showing the cobbled areas, background, and demolition layer [1148], in the eastern bay of the building, in the foreground Fig 13

A fragment of stone wall, [2153], in Area 2 was 3.65m long and 0.45m wide and north-east to south-west aligned. It was constructed of roughly faced local greensand which was irregularly coursed and bonded with a sandy mortar (Figs 14 and 17, Section 3). The construction cut for the wall was 0.64m wide and 0.30m deep with vertical sides and a flat base. The wall may be the remains of a field barn. Another fragment of stone wall on a similar alignment, but belonging to a separate building, was found during the evaluation *c* 16m to the east (Fig 5). Pottery associated with the wall dated to the 16th century.

Wall [2153], looking south-west Fig 14

A pond was excavated in the late medieval or post-medieval period, possibly at the same time as the construction of the building. It was at least 20m long and 8m wide and it had been largely excavated within the moat footprint, although the western and eastern edges extended out considerably (Fig 15). There was evidence of a very fragmentary stone wall that bounded the western edge of the pond. Local sources suggest that it was backfilled during the 1960s.



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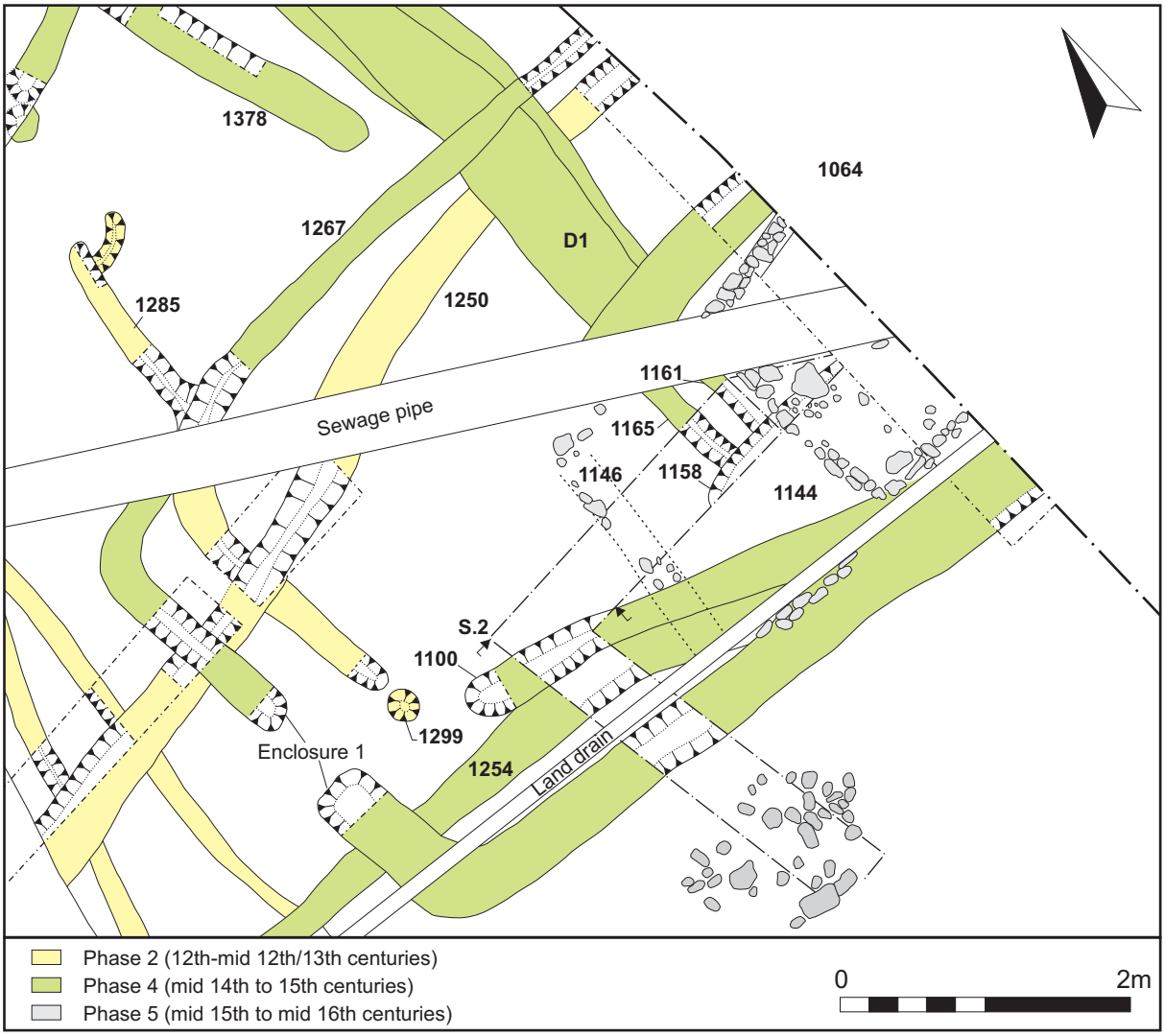
Phase 5: Late medieval (mid 15th to mid 16th centuries) Fig 15

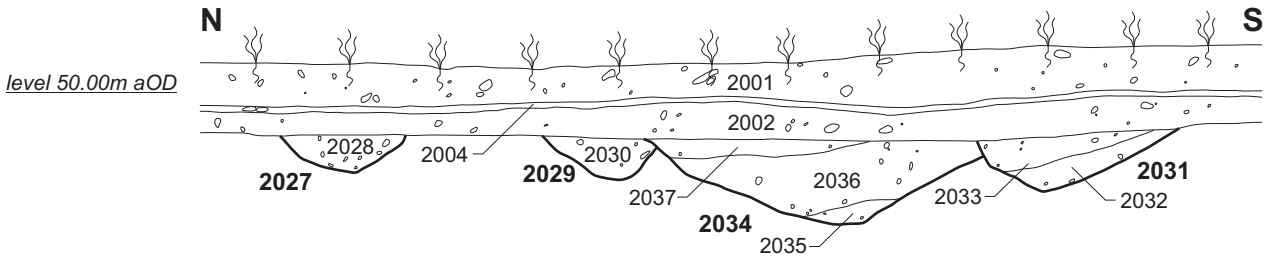


Scale 1:100

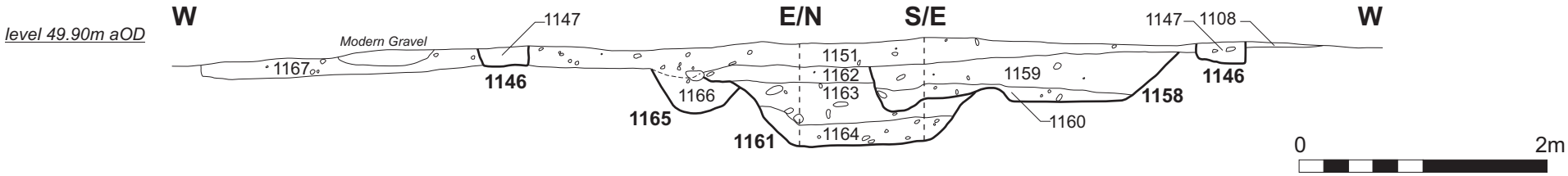
Enclosure 1 and the stone building Fig 16

Scale 1:50, 1:25

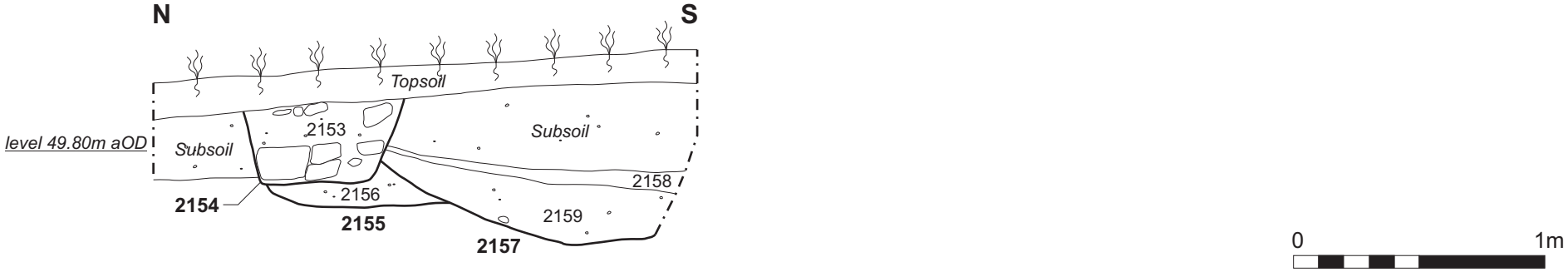
Section 1: The Saxon boundary ditches



Section 2: The medieval ditches and stone building



Section 3: The Saxon boundary ditch and post-medieval wall



Sections of Saxon and medieval ditches Fig 17

6 THE FINDS

6.1 The Saxon and medieval pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 2,595 sherds with a total weight of 21,770g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 13.99. It comprised a mixture of late Saxon and medieval wares which indicate that the site was occupied from the 10th-early/mid 16th centuries, although there seems to have been something of a hiatus in activity during the mid 13th-mid 14th centuries. Small assemblages of early/middle Saxon hand-built ware and residual Romano-British material were also present.

The range of medieval vessel types present suggests that the site was of a somewhat higher than normal status in the later medieval period, and also reflects the evidence that industrial activity was taking place at that time.

Fabric

Most of the wares are types which are well-known in the region. Where appropriate, the codes and chronology of the Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service type-series (eg Baker and Hassall 1977) were used, as follows:

Area 1

The pottery assemblage from Area 1 comprised 2,079 sherds with a total weight of 18,652g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 11.57. The following fabric types were noted:

F2: A18: **Early/Middle Saxon Hand-built ware**, *c* AD450-850. Moderate to dense sub-angular quartz up to 1.0mm. Rare angular flint up to 3mm. 1 sherd, 8g, EVE = 0

F100: B01: **T1(1) type St Neots Ware,** *c*AD900-1100. 17 sherds, 71g, EVE = 0.10

F200: B01A: **T1(2) type St Neots Ware,** *c*AD1000-1200. 336 sherds, 1719g, EVE = 1.85

F330: B07: **Medieval Shelly Ware**, AD1100-1400. 330 sherds, 3288g, EVE = 1.89

F324: C09: **Brill/Boarstall Ware**, 13th-15th centuries, 21 sherds, 226g, EVE = 0.18

F329: C10: **Potterspury Ware**, mid 13th-15th centuries, 41 sherds, 297g, EVE = 0.12

F356: C16: **Surrey Whiteware**, mid 13th-15th centuries. 1 sherd, 8g, EVE = 0.02

F362: C59a: **Coarse Sandy Ware**, 12th-13th centuries, 60 sherds, 1063g, EVE = 0.71

F363: C59b: **Sandy ware**, 12th-13th centuries, 230 sherds, 2683g, EVE = 2.31

F408: C66: **Brill/Boarstall 'Tudor Green' type ware,** mid 15th-mid 16th centuries, 2 sherds, 7g, EVE = 0.16

F365: E01: **Late Medieval Reduced Ware**, mid 14th-16th centuries, 865 sherds, 7808g, EVE = 3.88

F401: E02: **Late Medieval Oxidized Ware**, mid 14th-16th centuries, 73 sherds, 743g, EVE = 0.14

F425: P01: **Glazed Red Earthenware**, 16th century? 1 sherd, 4g

F404: P12: **Cistercian Ware,** *c*AD1470-1550. 12 sherds, 57g, EVE = 0

F403: P13: **Surrey 'Tudor Green' type ware**, AD1380-1550. 12 sherds, 73g, EVE = 0.02

F405: P23: **Raeren Stoneware**, AD1450-1550. 5 sherds, 82g, EVE = 0.19

In addition, the following, not in the Bedfordshire type-series, was also noted:

F402: **Bourne 'D' Ware,** *c*1450-1637 (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 409). Manufactured in the eponymous south Lincolnshire village. Fairly hard, smooth, brick-red fabric, often with a grey core and sparse calcitic inclusions up to 2mm. Full range of late medieval to early post-medieval vessel forms, jugs, pancheons, cisterns etc. Vessels often have a thin, patchy exterior white slip, over which a clear glaze had been applied. 56 sherds, 311g, EVE = 0

A small assemblage (nine sherds, 98g) of residual Romano-British pottery was also present. The post-Roman fabric types are mostly all well-known in the region, apart from the Bourne 'D' ware, which is rare in Bedfordshire. Most of the assemblage was made

up by a single jug (Fig 17.4), although single sherds from two other vessels were also noted.

Area 2

The pottery assemblage from Area 2 comprised 516 sherds with a total weight of 3118g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 2.42. The following fabric types were noted:

F2: **Early/Middle Saxon Hand-built ware**, *c*AD450-850. Moderate to dense sub-angular quartz up to 1.0mm. Rare angular flint up to 3mm. 4 sherds, 50g, EVE = 0.18

F100: B01 **T1(1) type St Neots Ware,** *c*AD900-1100. 214 sherds, 954g, EVE = 1.30

F200: B01A: **T1(2) type St. Neots Ware,** *c*AD1000-1200. 182 sherds, 735g, EVE = 0.47

F330: B07: **Medieval Shelly Ware**, AD1100-1400. 9 sherds, 83g, EVE = 0

F362: C59a: **Coarse Sandy Ware**, 12th - 13th centuries, 2 sherds, 6g, EVE = 0

F363: C59b: **Sandy ware**, 12th-13th centuries, 13 sherds, 166g, EVE = 0.08

F365: E01: **Late Medieval Reduced Ware**, mid 14th-16th centuries, 44 sherds, 649g, EVE = 0.39

F401: E02: **Late Medieval Oxidized Ware**, mid 14th-16th centuries, 46 sherds, 436g, EVE = 0

A small assemblage (two sherds, 39g) of residual Romano-British pottery was also present. The post-Roman fabric types are mostly all well-known in the region.

Chronology and quantitative analysis

Each context-specific pottery group was given a Ceramic Phase date (CP) based on the range of ware types present, with the two excavation areas analysed separately. The scheme, and the pottery occurrence by phase, is shown in Tables 1 and 2. Tables 3 and 4 show the pottery occurrence per ceramic phase by major fabric type for each area. The data in table X1 indicates that there was low-level activity in Area 1 in the late Saxon period, probably during the 11th century, but pottery did not begin to be deposited in quantity until the CP3, 12th-mid 13th century. There is a drop in pottery consumption in CP4, the mid13th-mid 14th century, which may be evidence of a hiatus in activity related to the economic decline and plagues of the 14th century, but the defining ware for the phase, Potterspury Ware, is from a relatively distant source, and it may be this which is skewing the data. This is discussed in greater detail below. The site was then continually occupied from that time until it fell from use in the early-mid 16th century.

Table 1: Ceramic phase chronology and pottery occurrence per ceramic phase, Area 1

	Date (century)	Defining Ware	No	Wt	EVE
CP1	10th	B01	1	9	0
CP2	11th	B01A	42	275	0.28
CP3	12th – mid 13th	B07, C59a, C59b	342	3719	3.10
CP4	Mid 13th – mid 14th	C10	108	920	0.50
CP5	Mid 14th –15th	E01, E02	899	6957	4.27
CP6	15th - mid 15th	P13	104	1133	0.51
CP7	Mid - late 15th	C66, P23, F402	284	2803	1.05
CP8	Late 15th – mid 16th	P12	267	2011	1.47
CP9	Mid 16th +	P01	2	10	0

The data in Table 2 shows quite a different pattern for Area 2, and indicates that there was fairly intensive activity during the 10th-12th centuries, but then that the area was then abandoned apart a few deposits of pottery during the mid 14th-15th centuries.

Table 2: Ceramic phase chronology and pottery occurrence per ceramic phase, Area 2

	Date (century)	Defining Ware	No	Wt	EVE
CP1	10th	B01	210	982	1.48
CP2	11th	B01A	91	264	0.15
CP3	12th – mid 13th	B07, C59a, C59b	116	729	0.40
CP4	Mid 13th – mid 14th	C10	0	0	0
CP5	Mid 14th –15th	E01, E02	98	1137	0.39
CP6	15th - mid 15th	P13	0	0	0
CP7	Mid - late 15th	C66, P23, F402	0	0	0
CP8	Late 15th – mid 16th	P12	0	0	0
CP9	Mid 16th +	P01	0	0	0

The data in Table 3 shows a pattern of pottery use for Area 1 which is generally what would be expected for a site in the region, given the range of ware types present. Residuality is fairly high in CP4, CP5, and CP7, where residual material makes up between a fifth and a quarter of the assemblage in each case.

Table 3: Pottery occurrence per ceramic phase, major fabric types only, by percentage of the phase assemblage, by weight (in g), Area 1

	CP1	CP2	CP3	CP4	CP5	CP6	CP7	CP8
B01	100%	2.2	0.6	0	0.5	0	0	0
B01A	-	82.9	9.7	26.5	8.2	0.7	7.6	4.4
B07	-	-	44.4	8.0	18.5	2.2	3.7	0
C59a	-	-	4.2	31.3	6.5	9.3	2.2	0
C59b	-	-	39.8	27.2	10.8	0	6.6	0.8
C09	-	-	-	5.2	0.9	0	2.4	0.5
C10	-	-	-	1.1	0.7	2.1	5.4	3.2
E01	-	-	-	-	50.2	76.3	54.6	62.7
E02	-	-	-	-	2.7	2.0	13.0	8.4
P13	-	-	-	-	-	5.4	0.2	0.4
F402	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.2	13.7
P23	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.9	0
P12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.8
Total	9	275	3719	920	6957	1133	2803	2011

Shaded cells = residual

The data in Table 4 are fairly typical, given the lack of activity after the 12th century. It is notable that the CP5 assemblage does not have the same high level of residuality seen in Area 1, indicating that activity evidenced by archaeological deposits was generally sparser in that area of the site.

Table 4: Pottery occurrence per ceramic phase, major fabric types only, by percentage of the phase assemblage, by weight (in g), Area 1

	CP1	CP2	CP3	CP4	CP5	CP6	CP7	CP8
B01	93.3%	0.8	0	0	3.2	0	0	0
B01A	-	99.2	64.9	0	0	0	0	0
B07	-	-	11.0	0	0.3	0	0	0
C59a	-	-	0.8	0	0	0	0	0
C59b	-	-	22.8	0	0	0	0	0
E01	-	-	-	-	57.1	0	0	0
E02	-	-	-	-	38.3	0	0	0
Total	982	264	729	0	1137	0	0	0

Shaded cells = residual

Vessel Consumption

Area 1

The data in Table 5 shows the vessel occurrence per ceramic phase. The pattern is generally perhaps what would be expected, with jars comprising the bulk of the assemblage in the earlier medieval period, and jugs becoming more common with time. The wide range of vessel forms in use in the later part of the medieval period is a little unusual for a non-urban site, and suggests the site was of high-status, and also compliments the evidence for industrial activity. This is discussed in greater detail below.

The lack of jug sherds from CP4, along with the very high jar occurrence, is somewhat unusual. The 13th-14th centuries usually saw a much higher occurrence of jugs than in preceding centuries. For example, at the manorial site at Tempsford in Bedfordshire, jugs comprised 8.4% of the mid 13th to mid 14th-century assemblage (Blinkhorn 2005, table 7).

Table 5: Vessel occurrence, in EVE, expressed as a percentage of the CP assemblage by vessel type, Area 1

	CP2	CP3	CP4	CP5	CP6	CP7	CP8
Jars	82.1%	87.7	90.0	62.5	31.3	51.4	33.3
Bowls	17.9	12.3	10.0	15.5	27.5	18.1	40.1
Jugs	0	0	0	22.0	19.6	0	23.1
Cup	0	0	0	0	3.9	30.5	2.0
Curfew	0	0	0	0	17.6	0	0
Lids	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.4
Other*	-	-	Curfew	-	-	Curfew, Cistern	Dripping Dish, Cistern
Total EVE	0.28	3.10	0.50	4.27	0.51	1.05	1.47

*Non-rim fragments from vessels other than jars, bowls or jugs

Area 2

The data in Table 6 shows the vessel consumption pattern for Area 2. The results are generally what would be expected. The late Saxon and Saxo-Norman phases, CP1 and CP2, are dominated by jars, with bowls being the only other vessel type present. The

high proportion of bowls is a fairly typical pattern for St Neots Ware consumption, the only contemporary pottery type in use at that time. For example, at Tempsford, where St Neots ware was the dominant late Saxon fabric type, bowls comprised 29.9% of the assemblages of that date (ibid). The pattern for CP5 is typical of the period.

Table 6: Vessel occurrence, in EVE, expressed as a percentage of the CP assemblage by vessel type, Area 2

	CP1	CP2	CP3	CP5
Jars	74.3%	73.3	37.5	51.3
Bowls	25.7	26.7	62.5	0
Jugs	0	0	0	48.7
Other*	-	-	-	-
Total EVE	1.48	0.15	0.40	0.39

*Non-rim fragments from vessels other than jars, bowls or jugs

Cross-fits

Area 1
1021 (CP5) = 1252 (CP3) = 1261 (CP3), highly decorated jug, fabric C59b (Fig 18.4)

A sherd from 1013 is from a storage vessel from context 1091 (Fig 18.3), but did not join.

Sherds from a curfew were noted in contexts 1088, 1172, 1268, and 1270, but no cross-fits were made (Fig 18.6).

Area 2
No cross-fits were made, although the sherds of Sandy Ware (C59b) from contexts [2032] and [2036] all appear to be from the same vessel.

The assemblages, Area 1

Ceramic Phase 1: 10th century. 1 sherd, 9g, EVE = 0
The only stratified pottery of this date was a single sherd of St. Neots Ware.

Ceramic Phase 2: 11th century. 42 sherds, 275g, EVE = 0.28
All the pottery from this phase comprises St Neots ware, apart from two residual sherds of Romano-British material. The St Neots ware entirely comprises jars and bowls in B01A, apart from two small sherds of T1(1) type St Neots ware. The mean sherd weight for the phase assemblage is 6.5g, which shows that the assemblage is quite well fragmented. This value, however, is not unusual for St Neots Ware, which is usually quite soft and fairly friable. The mean value is lower than that at Tempsford (ibid), but similar to that for the St Neots Ware at the Langham Road and Burystead sites at Raunds in Northamptonshire (Blinkhorn 2009, table 6.10).

Ceramic Phase 3: 12th – mid 13th centuries. 342 sherds, 3719g, EVE = 3.10
This phase sees the introduction of shelly and sandy early medieval coarsewares (fabric B07, C59a and C59b) which are typical of sites in the region. St Neots Ware makes up around 10% of the assemblage, with medieval shelly ware being the major ware (44.4%), and sandy ware also well-represented (39.8%). The only vessels represented by rims were jars and bowls, although two handles from jugs in medieval shelly ware were noted. Jugs in this fabric are scarce, but tend to be of 12th century date. A partially complete jug with incised wavy line decoration occurred in two contexts of this date, and also in another dated to CP5 (Fig 18.4). This was the only vessel with incised decoration from this phase. A number of sherds with applied thumbed strips were present, one in type St Neots ware, two in type 2 St Neots ware, two in coarse sandy ware and the same number in sandy ware. They are almost certainly all from storage

vessels, such as the large jar in sandy ware (Fig 18.3). Overall, the assemblage is typical of sites of the period in the region.

Ceramic Phase 4: Mid 13th – mid 14th centuries. 108 sherds, 920g, EVE = 0.50
The assemblage from this phase is quite small, somewhat fragmented (mean sherd weight = 8.5g), and has a fairly high degree of residual material present (27.2%), which includes a single sherd of early/middle Saxon hand-built pottery, with the rest St Neots Ware. The contemporary pottery has a mean sherd weight of 11.0g. The main pottery types are coarse sandy ware (31.3%) and sandy ware (27.2%), with medieval shelly ware only making up 8.0% of the phase assemblage, and given the date-range of these wares, some of it is also likely to be residual. Glazed wares in the form of Brill/Boarstall Ware (5.2%) and Potterspury Ware (1.1%) were introduced in this phase, but are quite scarce, with the former represented by a single sherd, and the latter by two. They are present in similar proportions at Tempsford, however (Blinkhorn 2005, table 9). Most of pottery of CP4 date came from two contexts, [1087] and [1267]. Given the fact that this phase lasted around a century, and that over a quarter of the pottery is residual, this shows that there was very little activity in this area of the site at this time.

The rim assemblage comprises entirely jars and bowls, although the sherds of Brill/Boarstall ware and Potterspury Ware are all from jugs. No other vessel types were noted, other than a fragment of a curfew, or fire-cover. Sherds from this vessel were noted in later, residual contexts.

Ceramic Phase 5: Mid 14th – mid 15th centuries. 899 sherds, 6957g, EVE = 4.27
This period saw the deposition of the largest Ceramic Phase assemblage. Residuality is again quite high, at 26.0%, and the mean sherd weight, even when the residual material is excluded, is fairly low at 7.7g, indicating that most of the pottery is the product of secondary deposition.

The main pottery type from this phase is Late Medieval Reduced Ware, which makes up over 50% of the assemblage, although Shelly Ware (fabric B07), which probably fell from use around AD1400, is still well-represented, making up 18.5% of the group. It is very likely that at least some of this is residual, however. The rest of the assemblage comprises Brill/Boarstall (0.9%) and Potterspury Ware (0.7%), along with small quantities of late medieval oxidized ware (fabric E02; 2.7%).

The rim assemblage is still dominated by jars (62.5%), with bowls making up 15.5%, but jugs are now well-represented, comprising 22% of the assemblage, which is a fairly typical value for the period, and similar to that seen at Tempsford (Blinkhorn 2005, table 7). No other vessel types were noted. Decorated sherds were scarce; two Reduced Ware sherds, probably from storage vessels, had applied strip decoration, and two vessels, probably jugs, had incised cordons. Both of these are fairly common finds. Some residual sherds from the sandy ware jug with wavy line decoration (Fig 18.4) also occurred in this phase. Overall, the assemblage appears very functional, with nothing to suggest that the site had a status out of the ordinary.

Ceramic Phase 6: 15th – mid 15th centuries. 104 sherds, 1133g, EVE = 0.51
The assemblage from this phase is not particularly large, but residuality is considerably lower than in the two preceding ceramic phases (11.2%). The assemblage is again dominated by late medieval reduced ware (76.3%), along with small quantities of Potterspury Ware (2.1%), Oxidized Ware (2.0%), and, unusually for a rural site, Surrey 'Tudor Green' Ware (5.4%). The last-named is worthy of comment, not so much for the fact it is present, but that it appears very well-represented, and is more common than some wars from more local sources, such as Potterspury and Oxidized Ware. The occasional sherd of Surrey 'Tudor Green' does occur at rural sites in the region, but is usually scarce. For example, just a single sherd was noted during the excavation of the medieval villages of Tattenhoe and Westbury in western Milton Keynes (Ivens and

Hurman 1995, table 9), but 31 sherds were present at Tempsford Manor (Blinkhorn 2005, 63).

The rim assemblage is generally in keeping with that of a medieval site, with jars (31.3%) much less common, and bowls (27.5%) and jugs (19.6%) fairly well-represented. A large fragment of a possible curfew, probably residual, was also present and 'Tudor Green' cups made up 3.9% of the group. An extremely unusual fragment of a Brill/Boarstall double dish or salt also occurred in this phase (Fig 19), and is perhaps the earliest evidence of formal dining at the site and, by extension, status.

No decorated sherds were present, other than an E01 handle with incised lines.

Ceramic Phase 7: Mid-Late 15th century. 284 sherds, 2803, EVE = 1.05
This assemblage is fairly large given that the ceramic phase only lasts two or three decades. Residuality is fairly high (20.1%), although the mean sherd weight for the stratified material is not unusual for sites of the period, at 10.1g. Again, the assemblage is dominated by Reduced Ware (54.6%), with Oxidized Ware somewhat better represented (13.0%), and Brill/Boarstall (2.4%) and Potterspury Wares (5.4%) also more common. What is perhaps most significant about this assemblage is the presence of non-local late medieval wares such as 'Tudor Green' (0.2%), Bourne 'D' Ware (1.2%) and Raeren Stoneware (2.9%), as these are rare finds at rural sites in the region. This wide range of somewhat exotic pottery types is reflected in the vessel consumption pattern. Jars are the major vessel type (51.4%), and bowls also well-represented 18.1%), but jugs are absent and cups, the main vessel type in 'Tudor Green' and Raeren Stoneware, make up over 30% of the rim assemblage. No jug rims were present, although the Potterspury and Brill sherds are likely to be from such vessels. Just two handles, both in Brill/Boarstall ware, were noted, but they were both from small drinking jugs rather than the more common, larger serving vessels. A cistern bunghole was also noted (Fig 20).

Ceramic Phase 8: Late 15th – mid 16th centuries. 267 sherds, 2011g, EVE = 1.47
This phase saw the final period of occupation at the site, which appears to have ceased before the end of the ceramic phase. Residuality is very low (5.2%), and the assemblage is dominated by Late Medieval Reduced Ware (62.7%), with Bourne 'D' Ware common (13.7%), although this is probably a distortion caused by the presence of a partially complete jug (Fig 18.5). Late medieval oxidised ware is fairly well-represented (8.4%), and small quantities of 'Tudor Green', Cistercian Ware, Brill/Boarstall and Potterspury Wares complete the group.

The rim assemblage is dominated by jars (33.3%), bowls (40.1%), and jugs (23.1%), with the only other rims present being from cups (2.0%), lids (1.4%) and a dripping dish. The last-named is asymmetrical, and the EVE cannot be calculated. A fragment from a cistern was also present. The range of vessel forms, especially when the unstratified material is included, is what would perhaps be expected from a site of greater than usual status in an urban context. This is discussed in greater detail below.

Area 2
The assemblage from Area 2 is dominated by Anglo-Saxon and early medieval pottery, primarily in the form of St Neots wares and a small assemblage of hand-built early/middle Saxon pottery, including, in the case of the latter, a fairly large sherd from the rim of a jar (Fig 18.1). The rest of the assemblage largely comprises earlier medieval coarsewares, (medieval shelly ware, coarse sandy ware and sandy ware), and late medieval reduced ware and oxidized wares. The pottery occurrence by ceramic phase and the occurrence by fabric type per phase is shown in Tables 2 and 4.

The early/middle Saxon pottery is typical of sites in the region, and comprises simple, hand-built jar forms in a sandy fabric. Such pottery is known from many sites in the county, such as Bedford (Baker and Hassall 1979) and Kempston (Wells and

Slowikowski, 1996). Small assemblages of undecorated material such as that from this site cannot be dated other than to within the broad early/middle Saxon period, *c* AD450-850.

The late Saxon and Saxon-Norman assemblage is also typical of sites in the region, comprising entirely St Neots ware (fabrics B01 and B01A), other than the residual Romano-British and early/middle Saxon material. Again, such pottery is common in the area from sites of this date, such as Bedford (Baker and Hassall 1979). The 10th-century assemblage comprises entirely jars (EVE = 0.92; 70.8%) and bowls (EVE = 0.38; 29.2%), as does the 11th-century assemblage. In the case of the latter, jars comprised 73.3% of the rimsherds (EVE = 0.11) and bowls 26.7% (EVE = 0.04). A single small sherd with applied strip decoration, probably from a storage vessel, occurred in a 10th-century context [2040]. These are typical vessel consumption patterns for St Neots Ware at sites of the period in the region.

The 12th-century CP3 assemblage is dominated by St Neots ware (64.9%), with smaller quantities of early medieval wares such as shelly ware (B07), sandy wares (C59a and C59b) present, but Brill and Potterspury wares (fabrics C09 and C10) are entirely absent. Most of the sherds of sandy ware (C59b) appear to be from the same vessel. All the rimsherds from this phase were from jars and bowls. This all suggests very strongly that there no occupation in this area of the site in the 13th century, and that activity ceased during the 12th century.

The late medieval (CP5) assemblage, a small quantity of residual material apart, entirely consists of late medieval oxidized and reduced wares (fabrics E01 and E02), most of which came from a single context, [2117], and comprises sherds from a small number of jars and jugs (96 sherds, 1103g, EVE = 0.39). A single sherd of late medieval oxidized ware with combed decoration was present, but the vessels were otherwise unglazed and undecorated other than finger-grooving on the shoulders of the vessels, which is generally common on these wares. It seems likely that this represents a short period of quarrying or similar rather than occupation.

Illustrated pottery *(Figs 18-20)*

18.1: Jar rim, Early/Middle Saxon (F2). Uniform dark grey fabric. Inner surface of sherd is evenly sooted, with areas of black, burnt residue. Pit 2179, former hedgeline, Phase 1

18.2: Full profile of bowl. CP3, Medieval Shelly Ware (fabric B07). Grey fabric with brown surfaces. Ditch 1250, Phase 2

18.3: Rim from storage jar with applied strip decoration. CP3, Sandy ware (fabric C59b).Grey fabric with light brown surfaces. Gully 1089, Phase 4

18.4: Decorated jug. CP5, CP3, CP3, Sandy ware (fabric 59b). Light grey fabric with pale orange surfaces. Ditch 1250 and pit 1260, Phase 2 and Gully 1051, Phase 3

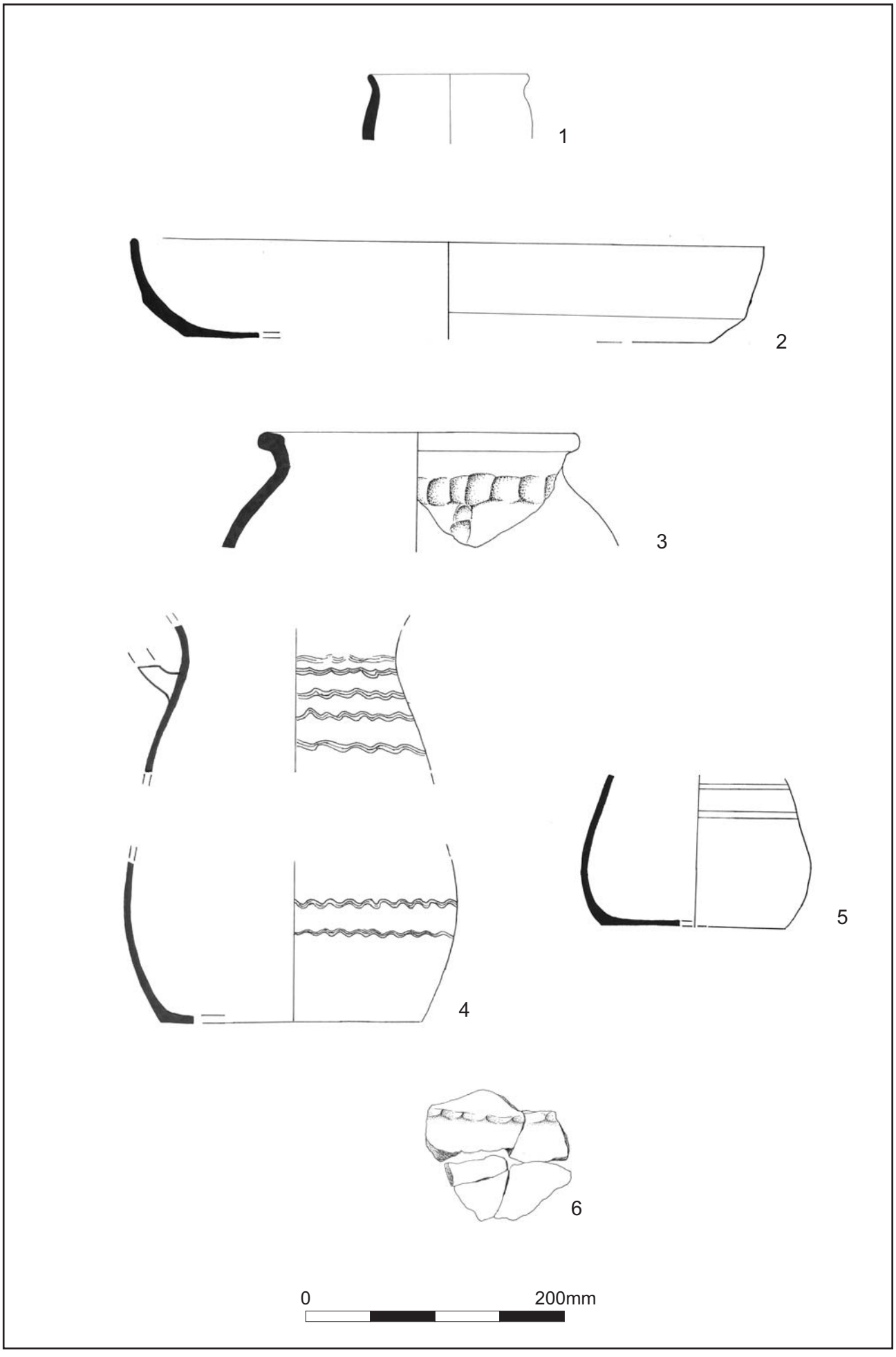
18.5: Lower part of decorated jug. CP8, Bourne 'D' Ware (fabric F402). Orange fabric with light orange-brown surfaces. Ditch 1158, Phase 4

18.6: Sherd from the shoulder of a curfew. CP7, Sandy ware (fabric C59b). Dark grey fabric with reddish-brown surfaces. Ditch 1270 (D1), Phase 4

Fig 19: Fragment of double dish? CP6, Brill/Boarstall ware (fabric C09), White fabric with buff core and surfaces. Patchy, copper-spotted bright green glaze. Cobbled floor 1112, Phase 5

Fig 20: Cistern bunghole. Late Medieval Reduced Ware (fabric E01). Uniform grey fabric. The hole is lined with a tube of lead which has been flattened out to a disc on the interior of the vessel. Unstratified

Fig 21: Rim from a chafing dish. Late Medieval Reduced Ware (fabric E01). Very hard, grey fabric with orange streaking on the outer surface. Unstratified



Scale 1:4

Saxon and medieval pottery 1-6 Fig 18

Brill/Boarstall double dish (Scale 50mm) Fig 19

Lead bunghole from a cistern (external, left, and internal views) (Scale 50mm) Fig 20

Rim from a chafing dish (external, left, and internal views) (Scale 50mm) Fig 21

Discussion

This assemblage of pottery, despite being relatively small, provides some useful insights into the nature of this site and a few points are worthy of further discussion.

One of the most striking aspects is the paucity of St. Neots ware in Area 1 when compared with Area 2, and suggests that late Saxon and Saxo-Norman activity at the site was concentrated in the latter, with no real evidence of activity in Area 1 during the 10th century, and it remaining largely peripheral in the 11th century. In the 12th century, both areas show evidence of activity, but this falls dramatically after the mid-13th century, with Area 2 appearing to have been completely abandoned. The scarcity of pottery from this phase suggests very strongly that there may have been a hiatus in activity here at that time. Certainly, this was not the case at Tempsford, where the contemporary phase produced the largest assemblage of pottery from the whole site. It also appears unlikely that it was due to the distance of this site from the potting centres at Brill and Potterspury. Tempsford is a similar distance away from them, and the proportion of these pottery types here in this phase assemblage in similar to that at Tempsford. It is possible that activity in the following phase, CP5, may have destroyed contexts of this date, as residuality in that phase is quite high, at 26.0%, suggesting either the moat was constructed in that phase, or it was constructed in this phase and there was a major phase of rebuilding in CP5.

It is worthy of note that the CP5 assemblage in Area 1, despite being the largest Ceramic Phase assemblage from the site, demonstrated a high proportion of residual material 26.0%, and the contemporary material appears of a very secondary nature, with a mean sherd weight of just 7.7g. It would appear therefore that there was fairly extensive ground disturbance during this phase, and either the moat was not built until this period, or there was an extensive phase of re-building. It would seem therefore that from the evidence from this and the following phase, and that the site was abandoned around the middle of the 13th century and the moat not built until perhaps the first half of the 14th century, or that the site was abandoned around the end of the 13th century, and the moat not constructed, or at least occupied, until the second half of the 14th century. Unfortunately, without the moat itself being excavated, it is impossible to be certain which was the actual sequence of events.

This vessel consumption pattern for CP7 is somewhat curious, and not what perhaps may be expected from a rural site, other than one associated with some sort of industrial process. It is possible that it is simply a distortion due to the relatively small vessel size, but it is quite different to the vessel consumption pattern at Tempsford, were cups made up no more than 4.9% of the contemporary assemblage (Blinkhorn 2005, table 7). They were entirely absent from the large assemblage at Tattenhoe and Westbury (Ivens and Hurman 1995, table 9). Given the evidence for iron-smelting at this site, it is likely that they were used by the workers involved in that process, although this is later than the pottery date obtained from the feature which produced evidence of iron-working [1098]. The fill of the feature, [1099], produced just nine fairly small sherds of pottery, with a *terminus post quem* of CP5, but at least four of which were residual. Given the unusual vessel consumption pattern for this phase, it is entirely possible that the feature is later than the pottery in it would suggest, and that iron-working was being carried out at the site during this ceramic phase. This preponderance of cups is not evident in CP8, and is instead more or less what would be expected from a domestic site of the period, and suggests that the industrial component of the site was negligible at that time.

The sherds of Raeren Stoneware, which all appear to be from different vessels, are unusual finds in this context. German Stoneware was quite common in the early post-medieval period, particularly Frechen and Cologne types, but Raeren Stonewares of the 15th century tend to mainly occur in ports and towns. The presence of Bourne ‘D’ ware (eg Fig 18.5) is also worthy of note. Such pottery, made in the eponymous Lincolnshire village, is rarely found to the west of the modern A1 in areas to the south of the Wash, and the Surrey Whiteware and Tudor Green wares are rare finds in the county, and

mainly occur in the towns. The fact that the cups were in relatively exotic fabrics but used for mundane purposes is not an unusual pattern, and has many parallels; they are evidence of trade and wealth rather than being expensive exotica (Brown 1997), and are a reflection of the importance of iron-working and the extensive trade network surrounding the industry. For example, the early medieval iron-working site at Deene End in Northamptonshire produced imported pottery such as Pingsdorf Ware and Rhenish Greyware (Blinkhorn 2003, 116), which are extremely rare finds in the county, and only known from the Northampton itself and the important wool-producing centre at Brackley.

The late medieval assemblage is particularly interesting, and suggests very strongly that the settlement was of a higher than normal status. The 15th century and beyond generally saw potters introduce a wide range of new vessel types, mainly associated with the storage, preparation, transportation and consumption of food and drink, although these tended to be mainly consumed in the towns. In the countryside, they are rare finds other than at high-status settlements such as manors. For example, at Bedford, Surrey Wares are amongst the wide range of regional and foreign imports known from the town (Baker and Hassall 1977, fig 102), although they are rare (ibid 180), and fragments of chafing dishes in local late medieval sandy wares are also known from the town (eg ibid fig 131 nos. 795 and 803), as are bunghole cisterns (ibid fig 129 no. 761), but they are again rare. At Tempsford Manor, a fairly wide range of medieval fabric types was present, although Bourne Wares were not, and a dripping dish fragment was also noted (Blinkhorn 2005, 67), although the site appears to have largely fallen from use in the second half of the 15th century. Few rural medieval settlements in the vicinity of this site have been excavated in recent years, although the relative paucity of 'developed' late medieval vessel forms at rural sites is perhaps demonstrated by the assemblage from the deserted medieval villages of Tattenhoe and Westbury, *c* 20km to the west of this site, an assemblage of over 80,000 sherds of pottery produced just three dripping dish fragments and one cistern bunghole (Ivens and Hurman 1995, table 9). Only a single sherd of 'Tudor Green' ware was present, and Surrey Whiteware, Bourne 'D' ware and Raeren Stonewares were absent.

This site has produced many of the 'new' vessel types dating to the late medieval period. There are a number of bungholes from cisterns, a vessel which was used for the brewing and storage of ale or beer, with one bunghole having a lead lining (Fig 20). The cross-section of the lining indicates that a square spigot or peg had been inserted into it. It appears to be unique. While such vessels are fairly common finds, this appears to be the only one known with a lead lining *in situ*. It is entirely possible that all other such vessels had this, and that the lead, which is easily recyclable, was removed once the vessel was no longer of use.

Further sherds include a fragment from the end of a dripping dish, a vessel specifically designed for catching the fat dripping from spit-roasted meat (eg McCarthy and Brooks 1988, Fig 49), and also an unstratified fragment from the rim of a chafing dish (Fig 21), a sort of footed bowl which would have held burning charcoal and would have been used to keep dishes of food hot at the table. One very unusual sherd is from a double dish or salt (Fig 19). These are extremely rare finds and this vessel, in Brill/Boarstall ware has few parallels. One of these in this fabric is known from Hertford College in Oxford (Mellor 1994, fig 53, no 17), but they are again vessels associated more with formal dining than everyday use. All these vessel types are associated with formal dining, something which was the generally the preserve of the richer and more powerful in the late medieval period, although the very highest ranks of society would have used metal and glass at the table, and not pottery.

It would appear therefore that there is little doubt from the pottery, that this site was of higher than normal status throughout the period during which the moat was occupied, although the use of pottery as tableware for formal dining suggests that the inhabitants

of the site in the late medieval period were perhaps of the then recently-emerged rural middle class rather than the highest rank.

6.2 Ceramic building materials by Pat Chapman

Roof tile

This assemblage of roof tile comprises 83 sherds, weighing 7.2kg. These are plain unglazed peg tiles with no nibs. The sherds are small and only two are large enough to measure their width, 145mm (5⅝ inches) and 165mm (6½ inches). They are all typically 12-13mm thick with only a few up to 18mm. Quite a few tiles still have remnants of white lime mortar adhering to the sides and surfaces.

The pegholes are round and vary between 12mm and 18mm in diameter. Some of the holes are quite wide at the top and occasionally ovoid as if the holes have been made by a peg pushed into the clay and then 'stirred' to widen the hole at the top. There are three tiles with square holes.

The fabric is essentially hard sandy clay, with *c* 50% being made with fine sand then most of the remainder grading down to coarse sand with or without reduced cores of varying thicknesses. The inclusions are occasional tiny flint, quartz and calcareous material with the occasional flint or quartz up to 8mm. The surface colour is typically orange, but ranges through the spectrum from brown to red, with the occasional sherd from a tile that has been overfired to purple-black. A few sherds have been made from fine silty clay fired to orange-pink. Just one tile was yellow in colour, probably made from Gault Clay.

The roof tiles would have probably been made locally as the geology of the surrounding area provides all the clays required. The presence of purple-black tiles and the one yellow sherd hint at the probable use of coloured tiles for patterns on the roofs. The nature of the assemblage indicates a date that ranges from the 13th to 17th centuries, before the introduction of pantiles.

Floor tile

Three sherds of plain floor tile, or paviours, came from cobbled layer (1022), Phase 5; fill (1162) of ditch [1161] and fill (1172) of pit [1171], Phase 4. They are 25mm thick with two having slightly chamfered edges. They are made from slightly coarse sandy clay, similar to the roof tiles, with very occasional flint up to 7mm long. The tops have white surfaces that have not been smoothed through ware. The tiles were pierced from underneath to about 17mm, none go all the way through, with round nails 2-4mm in diameter. This would have been to aid the firing of the thicker clay.

Brick

There is part of a moulded brick from fill (1294) of gully [1293], Phase 2. This is thin with a bullnose-type profile. One brick remnant comes from tile layer (1011). It is at least 55mm thick, but with no surviving surfaces. Both bricks are made from hard, slightly coarse sandy clay, bright orange in colour with occasional flint or quartz up to 5mm long.

Fired clay

Altogether there are 41 fragments of fired clay, weighing 893g. The seven fired clay remnants from fill (1099) of pit [1098], Phase 4 are associated with metalworking. Two fragments are the same fabric as the furnace lining (see metalworking debris report). The other five remnants would appear to have come from the furnace superstructure; they are hard, made from sandy clay and heated to orange, buff and black, the largest piece is 90 x 60mm and 40mm thick. The five pieces have closely-set wattle impressions 12mm and 15mm in diameter. The surfaces have been roughly smoothed and on the largest fragment is a finger trail. Fired clay from six other fills (1078, 1115, 1181, 1201, 1235 and 2101) are very similar in fabric and appearance and include a few wattle impressions of similar diameters.

The fired clay from contexts (1195) and (1270) are hard fine silty clay with occasional quartz, pinkish orange in colour with very irregular wrinkled surfaces. The largest piece measures *c* 50x40x30mm. These fragments are structural debris most likely from buildings.

6.3 Other finds by Tora Hylton

The excavations at Houghton Conquest produced a collection of 151 individual or group recorded finds spanning the Roman through to the post-medieval period. A substantial number of the finds (87) were recovered by metal detector from topsoil and subsoil deposits, while the remainder (64) were recovered from archaeological features dating from the late Saxon through to the late medieval/post-medieval period. A small number of late Saxon and medieval finds were recovered from deposits predating the construction of the moat (Phases 1 and 2), but the majority were located in mid 14th to 16th-century deposits to the west of the Moat (Phases 4 and 5). Some of the objects recovered from later medieval (Phase 5) or topsoil deposits are stylistically earlier in date, suggesting that soil disturbances have resulted in some material being redeposited and therefore residual.

The range of finds is small and the absence of structural fittings and tools is notable. The assemblage is dominated by items for personal use (dress accessories, toiletry equipment) and domestic use (preparation of food, locks and keys). Of particular interest is the presence of a complete copper alloy bowl dating to the 12th-13th centuries.

A total of 33 iron objects (excluding nails and small fragments) were submitted for X-ray. This was undertaken by Kelly Abbot, Contract Conservator with Wiltshire Conservation Service. This not only provided a permanent record, but it enabled identification and revealed technical details not previously visible. None of the iron finds warranted further investigation. All the finds are packaged according to standard guidelines.

Table 7: Finds quantified by material type

Material	Number
Silver	2
Copper alloy	66
Iron objects	53
Lead	25
Stone	2
Bone	1
Glass	1
Total	151

Roman finds

Three Roman finds were recovered from deposits lying to the east of the moated enclosure; their presence may attest to Roman occupation in the vicinity. A residual 4th-century copper alloy coin was recovered from the fill of a medieval boundary ditch [2034], while two copper alloy spoon bowls were located in topsoil deposits. The coin (identified by Ian Meadows) is a Constantine 1 (310-318), Rev: SOL INVICTO COMITI, Mint mark: Trier. Both the bowls are mandolin-shaped and represent a type produced throughout the Roman period (Crummy 1983, 69).

Late Saxon/medieval finds

In total there are 65 medieval finds; of that number, 47 were recovered from stratified deposits and a further 18 are stylistically datable to the medieval period, these were either residual within later features or recovered from topsoil/subsoil deposits.

The categories are tabulated below along with the quantities recovered.

Table 8: Finds quantified by period and category

Functional category	Late Saxon/medieval finds				
	Ph 1	Ph 2	Ph 4	Ph 5	U/S
Personal Possessions					
Costume and jewellery	-	-	1	3	10
Toiletry equipment	-	-	1	1	-
Recreation	-	-	1	-	-
Equipment and furnishings					
Building equipment - General ironwork	2	1	-	-	-
Building equipment - Nails	-	1	25	31	-
Window lead	-	-	1	1	-
Household items	-	1	-	2	2
Locks and keys	-	1	2	-	-
Horse equipment	1	-	2	-	2
Weapons	-	-	-	-	1
Knives	-	-	-	-	1
Coins	-	-	-	*1*	*2*
Miscellaneous and unidentified					
Copper alloy	-	-	1	2	-
Iron	-	2	5	5	-
Lead	-	-	-	-	-

Phase 1 (10th-11th centuries)

There is little to characterise the nature of the buildings or occupation during the 10th-11th centuries. With the exception of a residual 4th century Roman coin, just three finds were recovered. Two iron staples were recovered from pits [2143] and [2098], one would have been used as fixing point for chains etc and the other for binding timbers together.

The use of horses during this period is represented by a side-link for connecting the mouthpiece to the reins (Fig 22.2); it was located in gully [2141]. In addition two used fiddle key horseshoe nails were recovered from Phase 4 contexts, pit [1171] and posthole [1072]; typologically they are earlier in date, *c*11th-13th century (Phases 1or 2) and therefore are residual.

Phase 2 (12th-mid 13th centuries)

Six objects were recovered from Phase 2 deposits. Of particular interest is the complete copper alloy bowl (Fig 22), recovered from the base of a large pit [1260]. A barrel padlock case was recovered from ditch [1178], one of three ditches thought to have functioned as a funnel for livestock from the front to the rear of Plot 4. Its small size suggests that it may have been used on a chest or similar item. A stud with large head from ditch [1250] may have been used to decorate a door or chest. Finally, a timber nail was recovered from ditch [2051] and two undiagnostic fragments of iron were recovered from posthole [1332] and ditch [1250].

Phase 4 (mid 14th-mid 15th centuries)

A small group of domestic finds were recovered from Phase 4 deposits. Evidence for recreational activities in the form of music making is provided by a bone tuning peg from ditch [1226] (Fig 23). Other finds worthy of note include a padlock bolt from ditch [1046] and a padlock key from ditch [1193], both attest to the need for security at that time. In addition; a pair of tweezers were retrieved from gully [1158] and blade from a knife from pit [1230].

Phase 5 (late 15th –mid 16th centuries)

Thirty finds were recovered from Phase 5 contexts. The majority (27) coming from cobbled floor surfaces (1007, 1012 and 1022), while two indeterminate nails were located within a bedding layer for a stone floor [1150] and an undiagnostic fragment of lead was recovered from layer [1148]. A parallel-sided strip measuring 37mm x 16mm,

was recovered from layer [1177] together with seven hand-forged nails with sub-circular heads and shanks measuring 45-55mm in length. The x-ray reveals that the strip is perforated (x 2) and coated in a non ferrous metal, suggesting that it is part of a decorative binding-strip.

The finds from the cobbled surfaces appear to be mixed, a small number of finds are obviously post-medieval in date (eg lead window came, copper alloy eyelet for protecting/strengthening holes in items of textile or leather), but most appear to be medieval in date and therefore they may be residual. The latter include an iron buckle, a copper alloy buckle-plate, a nail cleaner/tooth pick and a stone mortar.

The finds

Personal Possessions
This category comprises small portable items which would have formed part of a person's clothing (costume fittings), worn as jewellery or held by an individual for personal use (toilet equipment). This category also includes items which may be considered for recreational use (musical instruments).

Buckles
There are eight medieval buckles, six of copper alloy and two of iron, and two copper alloy buckle plates, one of which is still attached to the buckle. Just one iron buckle and a copper alloy buckle-plate are stratified, from the cobbled surface (Phase 5); the remainder were all recovered from topsoil and subsoil.

All the copper alloy buckles have cast frames and they are represented by forms which date from the *c*14th-16th centuries. The earliest frames date to *c* 1350-1400 and include one with an oval frame and a protruding notch for retaining the pin (cf. Egan 1991, fig 42, 310), a rectangular frame with slightly convex sides and transverse ridges in each corner (Fingerlin 1971, 88) and a double-oval frame (cf Egan 1991, fig 50, 332). Mid 15th-16th century forms include, a rectangular frame with double loop (Marshall 1986, fig 7, 30), a double looped frame (cf Whitehead 1996, 355) and a D-shaped frame (Harvey 1975, fig 243, 1800).

Both the iron buckle frames have circular cross-sections, one has a circular frame and the pin is still attached (cf Egan 1991, fig 38, 47), it was recovered from the cobbled surface (Phase 5); and the other is D-shaped (cf Goodall 1990, fig 137, 1289,1290) and may have been used to secured heavy duty straps.

There are two copper alloy buckle plates, both are simple in form, they have been manufactured from a rectangular-shaped strip of sheet metal folded widthways (one-piece type).

Strap-ends
Two strap-ends were recovered from the topsoil. Two types are represented, defined by differing manufacturing techniques of varying complexity. Type 1 has been manufactured in two pieces, it is tongue-shaped with an angled terminal (Length: 30mm Width: 12mm) and it is secured by two rivets one at each end, one to fix the plates together and one to secure it to the leather strap (cf Pritchard 1991, fig 90, 640). Type 2 is part of a composite strap-end; originally it would have been manufactured from three or more individual components. It is tongue-shaped with an angled terminal and there are V-shaped cut-outs along the attachment edge (Fig 23.1). The exterior surface is ornamented with an engraved zigzag motif and the entire underside is coated in a white metal.

Lace chapes
Three lace chapes were found, each made from rolled copper alloy sheet, two are fragmentary and were found in ditch [1193] (Phase 4), together with a key from a barrel

padlock. They do not appear to be perforated but have an edge to edge seam, like Oakleys Type 1 (1979, 262-63). One chape was recovered from the topsoil and has been made from a triangular-shaped sheet rolled to form a tapered tube which measure 39mm long. Like the previous two examples it has an edge to edge seam and resembles an example from London which dates to *c*1270-1350 (cf Egan 1991, fig 188, 1439).

Mounts
Mounts are a type of fitting used to strengthen and/or visually enhance items of textile or leather. Only one mount was recovered (from topsoil), a quatrefoil mount with a perforated central boss, it would have been secured by two rivets with roves (extant). Mounts of this type date to the *c* 13th/14th centuries.

Toilet equipment
One pair of tweezers was recovered from gully [1158] (Phase 4). They are simply made from a folded parallel-sided strip of sheet copper alloy and they measure 44mm in length; the arms have a pronounced bow which would have held the tension and the terminal edge is chamfered. A similar example has been recovered from Bedford (Baker *et al* 1979, fig 173, 1342).

Finally a twisted strip furnished with a perforated terminal was recovered from a cobbled surface (Phase 5). Although incomplete, enough survives to suggest that it may be part of a nail cleaner or tooth pick rather like complete examples from Tempsford Park (Hylton 2005, fig 6.3, 11) and Norwich (Margeson 1993, fig 32, 397).

Musical instruments
A complete bone tuning peg was recovered from ditch [1226] (Phase 4). The tuning peg has been made from a strip of long bone; longitudinal facets on the surface indicate that it was cut with a knife rather than turned on a lathe. It has a squared-head and sub-circular shaft with slot cut into the terminal (for the string), and it measures 59mm long (Fig 24). Stylistically it displays similarities to Lawsons Type A (1990, fig 201, III-IV), which represents a type which would have been used to adjust the tension of strings on instruments like harps, lyres or fiddles (Lawson 1990, 713). This peg was recovered from a mid 14th-mid 15th century deposit and this fits in with Lawson's suggestion that most excavated examples derive from 13th to 15th-century contexts. Its presence is perhaps suggestive of high status, although this object has been very crudely worked, perhaps as a temporary replacement.

Equipment and furnishings

Building equipment
There is a dearth of items which would have formed part of or been attached the permanent structure of the buildings. With the exception of 57 nails, only two staples and one large stud were recovered, perhaps suggesting that most of the metalwork was removed prior to abandonment, either for reuse or recycling.

Two staples were recovered from Phase 1 deposits. Both examples represent different forms, U-shaped staples which would have been driven in to timbers to leave the end protruding to form a fixing point for chains rings or hasps and rectangular staples which may have been used to bind timbers together. The U-shaped staple has a sub-circular/rectangular cross-section; it measures 40mm long and 30mm wide and was recovered from pit [2143]. The rectangular example has inturned arms, a rectangular cross-section and it measures 30 x 18mm, it was recovered from pit [2098].

A complete stud with a sub-square head and rectangular-sectioned shank tapered to a point was recovered from rear boundary ditch [1250]. This example is particularly large, it measures 105mm long, with the head measuring *c* 46mm across. It is not dissimilar to an example from Norwich (Margeson 1993, fig 108, 1090) and may have been used for large doors and chests.

Nails

A total of 57 nails were recovered from Phases 2 (x1), 4 (x 25) and 5 (x 31). Of these 17 are unclassified, because they are too damaged, or corrosion deposits make accurate identification of the head shape impossible. The nails are hand forged with generally rectangular or square cross sections. The shape of the head was used to classify the nails and just four types were identified. The majority (x 26) have flat circular heads and measure up to 62mm, they would have been used in timber where they would have sat flush with the surface. Other types represented include five nails with T-shaped heads which measure up to 60mm in length and seven wedge-shaped nails with no distinct head, these would also have been used with timber. In addition there are single examples of nails with a lozenge head and an L-shaped head.

Household items

Household equipment is represented by items relating to the preparation of food, together with a small group of locks and keys and knives. Finally of particular interest is the presence of a complete copper alloy bowl.

Copper alloy vessels

There are examples of cast and sheet metal vessels. The former is represented by a crudely manufactured 'paw' like foot from a cast copper alloy cauldron (cf Egan 1998, fig 132, 460) and a cast rim fragment from a flat ware vessel, both are medieval in date but were recovered from topsoil.

The copper alloy bowl is manufactured from sheet metal (Fig 22). It was recovered from the base of pit [1260] (Phase 2) sited just outside the rear boundary of Plot 4. Although complete, the bowl is exceedingly fragile, much of the original surface has deteriorated and corrosion has led to the presence of holes in the base; the base is very much being supported and held in place by the rim. Complete bowls manufactured from sheet metal are rare finds; presumably their fragile nature ensures that they easily succumb to agents of corrosion. Two similar examples have been recovered from 11th/12th-century deposits, one from Faccombe Netherton (Goodall A 1990, fig 9.15, 157) and one from Fishergate, York (Ottaway and Rogers 2002, fig 1395, 15150), while a rim fragment from another was recovered from a *c*15th-century deposit in Northampton (Oakley, 1979, fig 112, 97). All the examples display similar traits, the bowls have curved profiles with flat out-turned rims and they all measure roughly the same size, ranging from 200-220mm in diameter; the Houghton Conquest bowl measures 45mm deep. Ottaway and Rogers have suggested that such bowls may have been used as a liner for a vessel, possibly of wood (2002, 2812) and that they may have held liquid, possibly to wash hands, as suggested by Goodall, A (1990, 431) and Zarnecki *et al* (1984, 254).

Other finds recovered include part of a stone mortar and two swivel rings, both were recovered from the cobbled surface (Phase 5). The mortar is manufactured from Oolitic limestone, although just a small fragment of the rim and part of the wall survives, available dimensions indicate that it would originally have measured 290mm in diameter (exterior measurement), while the interior surface, which displays signs of extreme wear would have measured 230mm in diameter. The rim has a flat top and measures *c*30mm thick and there is an incised groove set 26mm below rim, which would have provided stylistic definition to the exterior surface.

Finally there are two ovoid swivel rings coupled together like an example from Goltho and Barton Blount (Goodall fig 41, 108). Such items would have been used for attaching or suspending chains or hooks etc.

Locks and keys

There are two pieces of lock mechanism, a padlock case from a barrel padlock and a bolt from a box padlock. The barrel padlock case was found in ditch [1178] (Phase 2), it is cylindrical with an attached tube connected by an integral rectangular fin (Fig 23.4). Typologically it represents Goodall's Type B padlock, which would have been used

during the post-conquest medieval period (1990, 1001). The exterior of the case is supported by a series of applied vertical and horizontal strengthening straps, these measure 2mm wide, but at the terminals they measure 4mm wide. The case is coated externally with copper alloy, this not only acts as a braze, to fix the straps in place but it also enhances the lock's appearance and helps to prevent it from corroding. On the underside of the case there is a vestige of a T-shaped aperture, this is the hole for the padlock key. Although the mechanism appears to be missing, the x-ray reveals the presence of a single leaf spring measuring c30mm long within the confines of the case. Not dissimilar examples have been recovered from 11th century deposits at Goltho (Goodall 1987, fig 158, 101-102) and 12th-late13th century deposits at Norwich (Margeson 1993, fig 115, 1226).

The padlock bolt was recovered from ditch [1046] (Phase 4), it is complete but in three pieces. It comprises a U-shaped free arm which protrudes from a rectangular closing plate, to which two spines with leaf springs are attached. Bolts of this type with rectangular closing plates would have been used with a box padlock (Goodall 1990, 1002), a similar example has been recovered from the Motte and Bailey Castle at Chalgrove, (Duncan, 1988, fig 11, 24).

Keys

There are two keys, one for use with a barrel padlock key was recovered from ditch [1193] (Phase 4) together with a lace chape, and the other, a key for a mounted lock was recovered from topsoil. The barrel padlock key is complete, it has a relatively short (69mm) square-sectioned shank with a finely-shaped looped terminal folded back on its self, the bit is simple and set laterally to stem.

The key for a mounted lock has asymmetrical bits which protrude from the shank in the same plain as the kidney-shaped bow. The shank is solid but hollow towards the terminal, this latter feature aids security as the bore has to fit over a corresponding pin in the lock, as well as passing over the wards. Keys of this type are post-medieval in date.

Knives and whetstone

There are two whittle tang knives with single-edged blades, one was recovered from pit [1230] (Phase 4) and the other from the cobbled surface (Phase 5). Both are incomplete and range in recorded width from 18-20mm and thickness from 3-4mm. Each knife represents a different blade form, based on the alignment of the cutting edge and the back of blade; one has a blade with parallel-sides, which then tapers to the tip, and the back of the blade of the other slopes to the tip. Both examples represent types for domestic use.

Finally a single square-sectioned sandstone whetstone for sharpening knives and tools was recovered from subsoil deposits. All surfaces display signs of wear and faint knife point sharpening grooves are evident. Whetstones of this type are generally recovered from late medieval and early post-medieval deposits (Hylton 2010, 381).

Tools

There is a small group of objects which relate to the hand activities of spinning and sewing. They include four lead spindle whorls and two copper alloy thimbles. All were recovered from topsoil and subsoil deposits. The shape and size of the spindle whorls vary; a reflection of the purpose for which the whorl was required. They include two conical, one bi-conical and one plano-convex whorl, which range in diameter from 19-31mm and weight from 19.8g-89.2g. Three spindle whorls weigh over 46gm; heavier whorls would be required for spinning coarser yarn (Wild 1970, 33) and doubling or plying the yarn (Walton Rogers 1997, 1743). Although unstratified, all are probably medieval in date.

There are two domed thimbles measuring 21-22mm in height, one has been cast and the other stamped and hammered. Both are furnished with hand punched indentations which have been applied in a regular pattern of concentric circles. One has a bare

tonsure on the crown, a feature of relatively early thimbles dating from the 14th century onwards (Holmes 1988) and a marginal groove at the base.

Horse Furnishings
A late 10th to 11th-century context (Phase 1) produced the earliest evidence for the use of horses. Other material was recovered from Phase 4 contexts, but most items were recovered from topsoil.

A double-looped side-link was recovered was recovered from gully [2141] (Phase 1). One loop would have been attached to the mouth piece and the other the reins (Fig 23.2). It has a D-shaped cross-section and the x-ray reveals that it retains evidence for a non-ferrous coating. Stylistically it is not dissimilar to 10th/11th-century examples recorded at Thetford (Goodall 1984, 258-260) and Goltho (Goodall 1987, fig 160, 160), which also have D-shaped cross-sections, and Winchester (Goodall 1990, fig 334, 3881).

Other objects relating to the use of horses include two horseshoe nails, a spur terminal and a range of bells. Single horseshoe nails were recovered from pit [1171] and posthole [1072] (Phase 4), both have semi-circular heads (*cf* Baker 1979, fig 177, 1450), measure 30mm long and their terminals are clenched, indicating that they have been used. Fiddle key nails were used with the 'Norman' horseshoe, a shoe with a sinuous outline and oval counter sinking's (cf ibid 1979, fig 176, 1422).

A figure-of-eight spur terminal with vestige of transverse ridge moulding was recovered from the topsoil. The terminal is an example of Ward Perkins Type F (1940, fig 28), a type which was in use during the 15th century. Remains of ferrous corrosion deposits indicate that the rivets, which would have secured the spur terminal to the strap were made of iron.

Bells
Parts of five bells dating from the *c*13-17th centuries were recovered from the topsoil. Two are made from sheet metal, they have been manufactured in four pieces, two hemispheres (upper and lower half, pierced for acoustic effect) which would have been soldered together, the suspension loop and the iron pellet (sounding pea). This type dates from the 13th-15th century (*cf* Egan 1991, fig 221, 1645) and would have been used for dress as well as animals (Margeson 1993, 213).

Three bells have been cast. Two are identical, they are decorated with a vertical rib motif and the exterior surface is silvered. The other is furnished with a 'sun-burst' motif on its lower half (*cf* Baker 1979, fig 174, 1389), together with a possible worn bell founder's mark (now illegible). This type dates to the 16th-17th centuries.

Weapons

Arrowhead
A single arrowhead was recovered from the topsoil, typologically it dates to the medieval period (Fig 23.3). It has a tapered open socket; the blade is small, leaf-shaped, with a lozenge shaped cross-section with protruding ribs. Typologically it resembles Jessops Type 10, a mid 12th to 15th-century arrowhead used for military purposes to pierce armour (1996, fig 1, M10). A similar example has been recovered from Thetford (Goodall 1984, fig 144, 297).

Coins
There are two hammered silver coins, both were recovered from topsoil. One has been identified as a penny of Edward III (1327-77) and the other is exceedingly worn and damaged and therefore completely illegible.

Post-medieval finds

A range of post-medieval finds were recovered from cobbled surfaces (Phase 5) and topsoil/subsoil deposits. Those worthy of note include fifteen coins and jettons (see table

below), eight copper alloy buckles for securing items of clothing or shoes, four pieces of window came and eleven pieces of lead shot.

The buckles comprise types commonly recovered from post-medieval deposits. They include four buckles with double oval frames, one with rosettes on the outer edge (*cf* Margeson 1993, fig 17, 174) and one with scrolled mouldings forming corner knops (*cf* Whitehead 1996, fig 68, 427). Both examples date to the 16th/17th century. There are three buckles with curved profiles that date to the 17th/18th century. Two are rectangular, both with holes in the side of the frame to retain a separate spindle, one is a shoe buckle (46 x 42mm) still retains an corroded iron spindle, the other is small (22 x18mm) would have been furnished with an attachment button (*cf* Egan 2005, fig 19, 121), it may have been used for shoes or at the knee on breeches. Finally there is a fragment from a cast Georgian shoe buckle decorated with a lozenge and pellet motif.

Finally there are four small pieces of H-sectioned window came. One fragment was recovered from a cobbled area, therefore may relate to the later stone building, while the remainder were all recovered from subsoil and topsoil deposits. The fragments measure no more than 95mm in length and one piece is triangular in shape and may represent a corner where *c*3 quarries join.

The lead shot range in size from 10-15mm in diameter, suggesting that they may have been for use with pistols as well as muskets (Egan 2005, 202).

Table 9: Post-medieval coins

Identification	Date
Context 2001	
Charles II (1660-1685) Rose farthing	Illegible
William III (1689-1694) Halfpenny	1699
William III (1689-1694) Halfpenny	Illegible
George II (1727-1760) Halfpenny	Illegible
George III (1760-1820) Halfpenny	1769
George III (1760-1820) Halfpenny	1799
Context 1001	
George III (1760-1820) Halfpenny	Illegible
George III (1760-1820) Halfpenny	Illegible
Illegible	Illegible

Table 10: Post-medieval jettons

Identification	Date	Context
Obverse: Three open crowns and three lys arranged alternately around a rose. Within an inner circle of rope patten. Legend: HANNS.KRAVWINCKEL.IN.NVR Reverse: The Reichsapfel within a double tressure of three curves and three angles set alternately, within an inner circle of rope pattern. Legend: ILLEGIBLE	*c*1580-1610	1001
Illegible	Illegible	
Obverse: Three open crowns and three lys arranged alternately around a rose. Within an inner circle of rope patten. Legend: HANNS.KRAVWINCKEL.IN.NVR. Reverse: The Reichsapfel within a double tressure of three curves and three angles set alternately, within an inner circle of rope pattern. Legend: GOTES.SEGEN.MACHT.REICH. Ref: Barnard 1916, Plate XXXIII, 84	*c*1580-1610	2001
Illegible	Illegible	
Illegible	illegible	1022
Nuremberg jetton - illegible	Illegible	U/S

Catalogue of illustrations (Figs 21–23)

22 Bowl, copper alloy. Ext. Dia *c*200mm, Int Dia 185mm, Depth 45mm, Th. of base: 1.0mm, Width of rim 7mm; Th. of rim 1.3mm, SF130, Context 1262, Phase 2, Pit 1260

23.1 Strap-end, copper alloy. Composite type, incomplete, one piece only. Length 46mm Width: 17mm

23.2 Side link, iron. Length: 86mm Width: 30mm, SF167, Context 2142, Phase1, Gully 2141

23.3 Arrowhead, iron. Complete length 90mm, Socket - length 65mm, Width: 16mm Blade - length 25mm Width: 16mm, SF53, Context 1001, topsoil

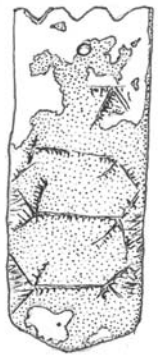
23.4 Padlock case, iron. Length: 45mm Dia: 22mm, SF149, Context 1179, Phase 2, Ditch 1178

24 Bone tuning peg, 59mm long, ditch 1226, phase 4, SF159

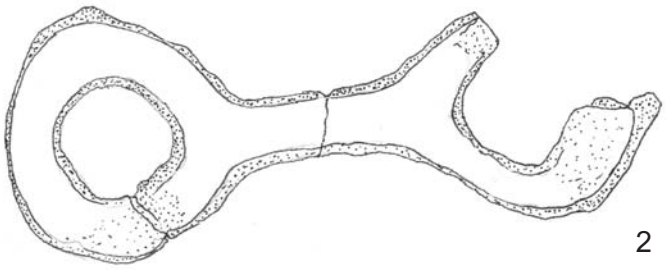
Scale interval 10mm

Scale 10mm

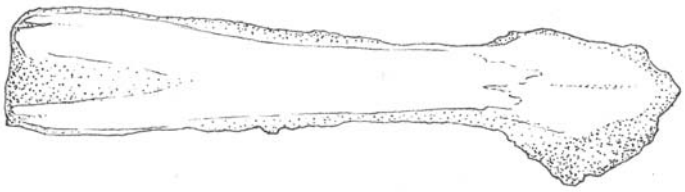
The copper bowl Fig 22



1

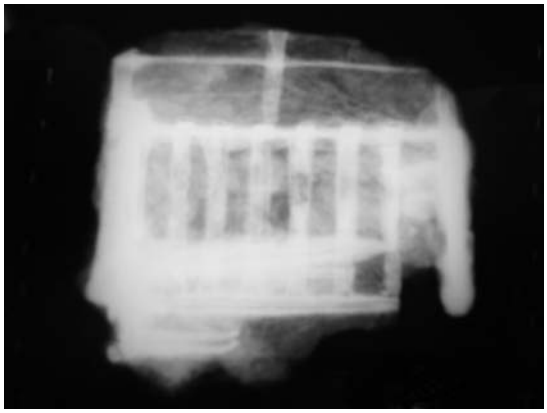


2



3

0 50mm



4

The bone tuning key (Scale 10mm) Fig 24

6.4 The metalworking debris by Andy Chapman

A total of 7.4kg of material broadly classed as metalworking debris was recovered from 49 separate contexts. There is an average of 151g per context, but only 12 contexts produced 150g or more. It is these larger assemblages that include larger pieces and groups of material that are probably primary debris. The majority of the contexts contained single pieces or small groups of small fragments of slag, weighing *c* 10-100g, probably present as a result of secondary deposition.

Late Saxon iron smelting

There is a group of material coming from contexts dated to Ceramic Phase CP1, the 10th century. This comprises small quantities of tap slag from a layer (2040), a series of postholes (Building 1, Area 2; Fig 7) and a ditch [2116]. The majority of these features contained less than 50g of slag, but slightly larger groups came from two postholes, each producing around 100g, while another posthole [2074] contained 490g of tap slag and some furnace slag, and pit [2098] contained 786g of tap slag.

The consistent appearance of tap slag in all of these contexts, particularly the postholes, and the consistent dating to the 10th century, indicates that there was an early episode of iron smelting. A single posthole [2082] is dated to the 11th century, but the small pieces of slag, weighing only 13g, might be residual in this instance.

Medieval iron smithing

It is unclear to what extent ironworking may have been practiced during the 12th to mid 13th centuries (Ceramic Phase CP3). There are only small quantities of material from a few contexts dated to this period, but the near absence of tap slag makes it unlikely that this material is residual from the earlier episode of metalworking. However, a small quantity of tap slag from a gully [2048] probably was. There are few small groups of miscellaneous slag or furnace/hearth lining from three postholes (part of the fenceline, Area 1; Fig 9), while ditch [1250] produced individual lumps of furnace slag, weighing 148g. This suggests that in the 12th to mid 13th century there may have been some secondary smithing on the site, but not iron smelting.

Late medieval iron smelting and smithing

The largest group of material is from contexts dated to the mid-14th century and 15th century (Ceramic Phase CP5). These include ditches [1034] (D2; Fig 11), [1064], [1069] and [1061] as well as pits and postholes [1072], [1094] and [1098] (Fig 11). The single largest group came from pit/posthole [1072], which contained a total of 2.1kg of material (29% of the entire assemblage from the site), while other primary groups came from ditch [1034], 730g, and pit [1098], 364g.

There was a possible smithing hearth base, weighing 185g, from ditch [1061]. The larger groups mainly comprise lumps of miscellaneous ferrous slag, but some have quite fluid surfaces. One example, from ditch [1034], has fired clay adhering to one side, indicating that it had been attached to the lining of a circular furnace/hearth *c* 350mm in diameter. Although there is no tap slag mixed with the groups of furnace/hearth slag, a number of contemporary contexts, such as fill (1065) in ditch [1064], did contain small quantities of tap slag, suggesting that all of the debris may come from smelting furnaces.

In addition, the ferrous slag from pit [1098] includes a fragment of fired clay that is blackened and vesicular from over-heating on one face and has a wattle impression on the opposite face. This context also contained a quantity of fired clay with wattle impressions (see ceramic building material report), and it can be suggested that all of this fired clay may have come from the superstructure of a smelting furnace, presumably an above ground shaft.

The small groups of small pieces can only be broadly classed as miscellaneous metalworking debris. They typically comprise light and highly vesicular pieces, fuel ash slag, but include some denser lumps of non-magnetic ferrous slag. Some of the smaller pieces have fired clay adhering to them, indicating that the slag had accumulated against the wall of a furnace or hearth. They are therefore closely comparable in nature to the larger groups.

7 FAUNAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 **The animal bone** by Karen Deighton

A total of 16.6kg of animal bone was collected by hand. This material was analysed to determine the level of preservation and the taxa present (Table 11). The contribution to the understanding of the economy, status and function of the site was also considered.

The material was firstly sorted into recordable and non-recordable fragments. Then quantification follows Halstead after Watson (1979) and uses minimum anatomical element (Min AU). The following were recorded for each element: context, anatomical element, taxa, proximal fusion, distal fusion, side, preservation, fragmentation, modification, butchery evidence and sex (where appropriate). Vertebra and ribs (with articulating ends) were counted and noted as small or large ungulate but not included in quantification. Partial skeletons are not included in quantification in order to avoid over representation.

Epiphyseal fusion follows Silver (1969). Ovicaprid teeth were aged after Payne (1973), cattle after Halstead (1985) and pigs after Payne and Bull (1982). Recognition of butchery is after Binford (1981).

Results

Fragmentation, mostly the result of old breaks, varied from moderate to heavy with context as did abrasion. Thirty-seven bone fragments showed evidence of canid gnawing which attests to the presence of dogs/foxes at the site. Seven examples of butchery including evidence for chopping and filleting were noted. Burning was noted on two bones which constitutes possible evidence for roasting on the bone as the burning was patchy. The absence of any further burning suggests that it was not a preferred method of disposal.

Table 11: Aninal bone taxa by phase (summary)

Phase	10th-11th centuries	12th-mid 14th centuries	Mid 14th-mid 15th centuries	Un-phased	Total
Cattle	8	2	7	16	33
Sheep/goat	4	-	6	13	23
Pig	3	1	-	11	15
Horse	-	1	-	3	4
Dog	-	1	1	1	3
Cat	-	-	3	-	3
Deer (Red)	-	-	-	1	1
Domestic fowl	-	-	1	1	2
Bird	-	-	-	1	1
Sheep/Goat/Roe	1	-	-	-	1
Large ungulate	-	1	1	5	7
Small ungulate	1	-	1	7	9
Total	17	6	20	59	102

Skeleton

A partial cattle skeleton was recovered from pit [1172]. This consisted of fore limbs, hind limbs, mandibles and some ribs and vertebra. Unworn adult dentition was present suggesting an animal of 18-30 months. The almost complete nature of the skeleton, the lack of butchery evidence and its presence in a pit could suggest deliberate burial or at least dumping of the corpse, but the reason for this activity is unclear.

Analysis of age and sex was undertaken using tooth wear measurements and epiphyseal fusion. Unfortunately the tooth data (which is more reliable and more exact than epiphyseal fusion data) is too sparse to draw any conclusions about husbandry patterns. Fusion data is also too limited for any valid statements to be made. Evidence for sexing was limited to a canine tooth from a sow.

Discussion

The assemblage consists of a small range of common domesticates plus (red) deer and cattle appears to be the dominant species followed by sheep and pig. The taxa are those expected for the medieval period. Cattle were used for meat, milk, traction, horn and hides during the medieval period. Sheep were used for meat, wool and sometimes milk. Pig was used for meat only but all bodyparts could be eaten and the animals could be fed on domestic waste. Horses were used for transport and served as status symbols. The species was not usually eaten during this period (in fact it was proscribed by a papal bull), but meat from beasts that had outlived their usefulness was fed to dogs and hides and bones were utilised. However, no evidence of butchery was noted on horse bones.

Cats were largely feral animals but served a purpose in keeping the rodent population down and their fur was used. Dogs had many uses such as hunting, guarding, herding, pest control and could have also been present as strays and dog fur was utilised. Although dog bone is scarce (only two phased elements) their presence is attested to by canid gnawing in all phases. The presence of deer bone as opposed to antler (which could be collected after shedding) could suggest a high status for the site where venison was consumed, but only one bone is present. The presence of pig and deer could attest to the exploitation of nearby woodland. Finally, domestic fowl were utilised for both their meat and eggs.

The mixed nature of the material involved (in terms of both taxa and anatomical elements present) suggests the genesis of the assemblage to be kitchen or butchery waste. Unfortunately, bodypart analysis could not be undertaken, due to the paucity of suitable material, to distinguish between the two.

Slight changes in the taxa present through time can be observed. An apparent increase in the range of taxa present is seen in the mid 14th to mid 15th century phase. Sheep are absent from the 12th to 14th century phase and pigs from the mid-14th to mid-15th century phase. However, any statements regarding temporal changes are tentative due to the small numbers of bones involved.

Comparisons with other sites are of very limited value due to the scarcity of material.

7.2 **The charred seed** by Karen Deighton

A total of 21 samples were collected from a range of contexts by hand. These were analysed to determine the presence, nature and level of preservation of any ecofacts. The contribution of analysis to the understanding of the function of the site was also considered.

The samples were processed using a modified siraf tank fitted with a 500-micron mesh and 250-micron flot sieve. The resulting flots were dried and sorted for ecofacts using a binocular microscope (10X magnification). Identifications were made with the aid of the author's small reference collection, the atlases Cappers *et al* (2006), Jacomet (2006) and Schoch *et al* (1988), as well as the SCRI (Scottish Crop Research Institute Seed Identification) website. Residues were also dried and scanned.

Results

Preservation of plant remains was solely by charring. Fragmentation and surface abrasion were at a low level. Some of seeds were honeycombed (vaffolated?) suggesting they had been affected by heat. For the taxa present see Tables 12 and 13.

Table 12: Charred plant remains from Area 1

Cut/fill	1031/ 1015	1056/ 1065	1079/ 1080	1171/ 1172	1158/ 1159	1193/ 1194	1178/ 1179
Sample	11	18	19	20	21	22	23
Feature	Ditch	Ditch	Posthole	Pit	Ditch	Ditch	Ditch
Phase	Phase 2	Phase 4	Phase 2	Phase 2	Phase 4	Phase 4	Phase 2
Volume (litres)	20	20	20	20	20	20	10
Breadwheat *T.aestivum*	1	29	3	9	199	15	34
Naked barley *H.vulgare* var nudum	4	9	2	4	9	--	5
Hulled barley *H.vulgare*	3	8	1		9	--	1
Breadwheat/ barley	14	11	8	24	108	4	10
Oat/Rye	--	--	--	--	8	--	--
cereal	--	--	--	--	10	--	--
Cereal total	25	57	14	37	343	23	50
Pea *Pisum sativum*	--	4	--	--	2	--	--
Bean Faba sp	--	1	--	--	--	--	--
Pulse Leguminosae	1	2	--	--	--	--	2
Fruit stones	--	8	--	--		--	--
Pos chess Bromus sp	--	--	--	--	1	--	--
Fat hen *Chenopodium album*	--	--	2	--	1	--	--
Stinking Mayweed *Anthemis cotula*	--	--	1	1	1	--	1
Weed indet	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Weed total	--	--	3	1	3	1	--
Total	26	72	17	39	350	24	53
% cereal	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nutshell Corylus sp	--	1	--	--	3	--	1
Items ided/litre	--	3.65	0.85	1.95	18.5	--	5.4
charcoal	--	200	--	--	--	100	50

Table 12 contd

Cut/fill	1264/1265	1374/1375	1267/1268	1375/1379	1057/1058	1260/1263
Sample	24	25	26	27	30	31
Feature	Posthole	Posthole	Ditch	Posthole	Pit/working hollow	Pit
Date	Phase 2	Phase 4	Phase 4	Phase 4	Phase 4	Phase 2
Volume (litres)		10	10	10	10	10
Breadwheat *T. aestivum*	2	3	5	20	15	232
Spelt *T. spelta*	--	--	--	2	--	--
Naked barley *H. vulgare* var nudum	--	--	--	3	2	45
Hulled barley *H. vulgare*	--	--	--	6	6	13
Breadwheat/ barley	--	--	--	--	37	319
Oat *Avena sativa*	--	--	--	--	--	7
Oat/rye	--	--	--	--	--	2
cereal	--	2	2	17	--	10
Total cereal	--	5	7	48	--	638
Pea Pisum sativum	--	--	--		--	--
Bean Faba sp	--	--	--	2	--	--
Pulse Leguminosae	--	--	--	2	4	--
Fruit stones	--	--	--	--	--	--
Fat hen *Chenopodium album*	--	1	--	--	5	1
Stinking Mayweed *Anthemis cotula*	--	--	--	--	2	30
Dock Rumex sp	--	--	--	--	1	--
Buttercup Ranunculus sp	--	--	--	--	--	--
Plantain Plantago sp	--	--	--	--	--	--
Polygonaceae	--	--	--	1		--
weed	--	--	--	--	7	1
Total weed		1	--	--	16	34
Total	2	6	--	53	80	672
% cereal			--	--	--	--
Nutshell Corylus sp	1	2	--	--	--	--
Items ident/litre	--	0.8	0.7	5.6	8	67.2
charcoal	--	50	100	100	100	--

Table 13: Charred plant remains from A2

Cut/fill	2018/ 2020	2034/ 2036	2080/ 2081	2072/ 2073	2129/ 2130	2098/ 2099	2005/ 2006
Sample	12	13	14	15	17	28	29
Feature	pit	Ditch	posthole	Posthole	Posthole	Pit/working hollow	Pit/working hollow
Date	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 2	Phase1	Phase1	Phase 1	Phase1
Volume (litres)	10	20	10	10	10	25	10
Bread wheat *T. aestivum*	--	27	--	--	--	3	4
Naked barley *H. vulgare* var nudum	--	2	--	--	--	1	1
Hulled barley *H. vulgare*	--		--	--	--	--	--
Bread wheat/barley	--	37	--	--	--	--	5
Indet cereal	5	17	3	--	2	--	
Total cereal	5	83	3	--	2	11	10
Fat hen *Chenopodium album*	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
Sheep sorrel *Rumex acetosella*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Stinking mayweed *Anthemis cotula*	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
Weed indet	1	--	--	--	--	3	--
Total weed	4	--	--	--	--	6	--
Total	9	83	3	--	2	17	10
% cereal	--	100	100	--	100	--	100
Items ident/litre	--	4.15	0.3	--	0.2	--	1
Charcoal	--	50	20	20	6	10	20

Discussion

The cereal types observed included hulled barley (Hordeum vulgare), naked barley (Hordeum vulgare var nudum) and breadwheat (Triticum aestivum). All are usual for the medieval period. Samples from pit [1260], Phase 2 and ditch [1158], Phase 4 were possibly dominated by breadwheat, although it is difficult to be certain due to the amount of cereal not attributed to species (ie breadwheat/barley category). The low numbers of oat suggest it could be growing wild rather than cultivated as a crop.

Wild/weed types included fat hen (*Chenopodium album*), plantain (Plantago sp) stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*) and sheep sorrel. These are all common crop weeds or weeds of disturbed ground, although fat hen can be ground into flour in times of economic stress. Plantain and sheep sorrel are perennials and stinking mayweed and fat hen are annuals. Unfortunately, not enough wild/weed taxa were present to determine the conditions in which crops were growing.

The amount of nutshell fragments was too few to confirm gathering or accidental incorporation with wood collected for fuel. However, the presence of hazelnut shell could suggest coppicing.

The lack of chaff and small numbers of wild/weed seeds suggests a late stage in crop processing, ready for use or storage. This is turn suggests the site to be a consumer site, which could suggest high status.

The samples seem to have various origins:

A number of samples could be regarded as background accumulations (from Area 1 samples 1, 3, 4 and 22 and from area 2 samples 12, 14, 15, 17, 28 and 29) because of

their small size, representative of material that is washed or blown into features from activities taking place elsewhere. The two larger samples (21 and 31) could be the result of rubbish disposal, possibly cumulative. Equally, the origin of sample 31 could be accidental burning during storage which is suggested by the nature of the context (ie a pit fill) and the lack of charcoal fragments.

Comparisons between the two areas suggest ecofacts are apparently less numerous and less diverse in Area two. Charcoal fragments are on the whole less numerous per sample. Both pulses and nutshell are absent and only a single wild/weed seed is present. Indeed all samples in this area could be regarded as background. The poorest samples are from the 10th to 11th-century contexts within this area. Both large samples were from area one. Differences between the two areas could suggest a difference in activity/function between the two areas or possibly an increase in activity in later phases is represented.

Comparisons to another moated site at Tempsford (Hutchins 2005) show a similar range of cereals but rye is definitely identified here. Numbers of specimens are much smaller at Tempsford. A similar but larger range of weeds is seen here.

8 DISCUSSION

Late Saxon and medieval village development

While there was very limited evidence for Roman and early/middle Saxon activity in the area, there was no direct settlement activity on the site until the 10th century.

In the 10th and 11th centuries a series of rectilinear ditches defined a series of plots. The activities taking place within the plots appear to have been mixed with evidence of iron smelting as well as those of a more domestic nature.

The excavation has shown that there was planned settlement within the current village core by the 10th century, which developed into a series of regular, rectangular plots by the 11th century. This late Saxon reorganisation of the landscape has been discussed elsewhere and appears to have been a nationwide phenomenon following the re-establishment of Anglo-Saxon England following cessation of the Danelaw (Audouy and Chapman 2009).

The size of the excavation was not large enough to reveal the full extent of an entire plot, but, given the apparent lack of earlier boundary ditches, the earlier plots seem to have been based on larger land units, perhaps made up of basic one acre plots, up to 8 rods (40m) wide and 20 rods (100m) long or half-acre plots, only 10 rods long. By the 12th century the original plots appear to have been subject to further sub-division resulting in plots that appear to be only 2 rods (10m) wide and up to 10 rods (50m) long, resulting in quarter-acre plots.

The village appears to have expanded eastwards from the church during this period, possibly evidenced by the regular plots along the northern side of the High Street, which may be 12th century expansion into former arable (Fig 25; Platt 1978). The plots are long and narrow, but appear to be around an acre in size. The plot creation of this period appears to link two former small hamlets and from the evidence seen in the excavation it can be assumed that much the same had occurred on the southern side of the High Street. These apparently planned additions to pre-existing irregular settlements have been identified elsewhere in Bedfordshire, such as at Great Barford (Brown and Taylor 1991).

Before 1066, Houghton Conquest was not part of a large Saxon estate but was rather split into a number of small holdings of land the majority of which was held by a group of ten sokemen, who were essentially elements of the local peasant community. After Domesday the sokemen were replaced by individual lords, although the pattern of small-scale, dispersed land holding appears to have endured into the post-conquest period. This pattern, which is repeated elsewhere in Bedfordshire, such as at Wyboston, Eaton Socon (Brown and Taylor 1991) and Tempsford (Maull and Chapman 2005), appears often to be associated with the later construction of moated manors.

Houghton Conquest Enclosure map, 1808 Fig 25

The medieval moat

Bedfordshire has one of the densest concentrations of moated sites in the country with over 300 sites currently identified and those largely concentrated on land with underlying clay subsoil. Moated sites are relatively uncommon in parishes with land in river valleys.

The moated enclosure at Houghton Conquest was imposed over the preceeding plot system at some point during the 13th or 14th centuries. Although the exact period of construction is not known, finds evidence suggests that the moat was constructed in the early 14th century. This date range lies just within the phase of expansion of moated sites known to have occurred during the period 1200-1325 (Jean Le Patourel and Roberts 1978). The moat enclosed an area of at least 0.35ha and amalgamated at least two former plots. The moated site at Houghton Conquest is slightly unusual in that the upcast from the excavation of the moat ditches was not used to level and raise the moat interior, although this practise, though common, was by no means universal (Clarke 1986).

The imposition of a moated site over preceeding settlements, often lower status peasant holdings, is a well-attested practise. It has been observed at nearby sites such as Stratton, where the moated site was constructed over an earlier system of rectangular land parcels in a relatively marginal location (Shotliff forthcoming). Further afield, moated sites situated within a village such as Milton, Hampshire and Ashwell, Hertfordshire, required the demolition of pre-existing peasant houses (Platt 1978). Both were constructed in the early 14th century.

Based on the remaining L-shaped earthwork it is possible that the moat was originally square or rectangular in plan, a typical plan form, although the current site layout does not allow for this. Trial excavation on land at 3 High Street prior to development did not find any evidence of the moat ditch, or indeed, any other medieval activity, suggesting that a northern arm would have followed the course of the High Street or did not exist (Fell 2004). It is possible that Rectory Lane to the west of the excavation did not exist, or had a different alignment, during the medieval period and that the moat extended to the west. It is also possible that the abrupt change in road alignment to the east of the church, which is even more pronounced in the 1808 Inclosure Map, represents a deviation to avoid the north-western corner of the moated site (Fig 25).

While moated sites outside villages are generally thought to be farmsteads associated with the clearance of woods, or assarting, during the medieval period, moats which lie within villages are generally thought to have surrounded a manor house; being built as a partly defensive feature but probably more as a statement of social status (Lewis et *al* 1997). The location of The Limes in the centre of the village would therefore seem to suggest that it may have been a manorial residence. However, the notion of a manorial moated residence in use from the mid-14th century is slightly at odds with the finds evidence which suggests a fairly typical rural site until the 15th century, when more high status items were being used.

The organisation of the interior of the moated site is therefore not clear; and although there is extensive activity after the construction of the moat, there is little evidence for high-status manorial buildings. The earlier boundary ditches defined an area probably being used for light industrial craft activities such as iron smelting and smithing. It is possible therefore that this area of the moat interior was set apart from the higher-status buildings. By the mid-15th century there was some structural evidence, with a possible building of sill-beam construction and later a stone building of two bays was constructed with a surrounding cobbled yard. If the earthwork remains do represent the remains of a moated manorial site, then the hall and ancillary buildings appear to have been situated elsewhere, either to the west or south.

It is unclear whether the stone building, which was one of the latest features on the site, was associated with the moated site or was constructed after it had fallen out of use. The cobbled spreads with which it appears to be associated were dated at the latest to the 15th and 16th centuries. While the structural remains are not particularly 'manorial' in appearance, the finds from this period do suggest higher than normal status for a medieval site, including items of late medieval pottery including cisterns and dripping- and chafing-dishes and evidence of ready-processed grain being brought into the site. It is therefore likely that the main area of occupation was situated elsewhere within the moated enclosure, either to the south or west.

A series of furrows, remnants of the medieval open field system of cultivation, as found during the evaluation stage, were present to the east of the moat and only in the southern portion of the development site. Two distinct phases of agricultural activity, represented by differing alignments of furrows, were identified during the evaluation, although no stratigraphical relationship or absolute date for either was determined. There were no furrows within *c* 25m of the moated enclosure, indicating that this area was not cultivated during either the medieval or post-medieval periods. Subsequent to the disuse of the moat, the site appears to have been used as pasture.

There was never any significant development on the entire site following the disuse of the moated site; indeed within the interior of the moated enclosure there was no pottery dated later than the mid 16th century. There is some evidence for post-medieval structures to the east of the moat, as identified at the south-eastern corner of Area 2 and during the evaluation; they may represent the remains of field-barns.

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Websites

Bgs.ac.uk/geoindex
asis.scri.ac.uk

Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Northamptonshire Archaeology
2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822
e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk
w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk

CHAS Contractors Health & Safety Assessment Scheme Accredited Contractor www.chas.gov.uk

Registered Organisation IfA

Northamptonshire County Council