



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An Archaeological watching brief at Candle Lane, Woore, Shropshire September 2011



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SHRMS: E.00243



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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
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Approved by	Steve Parry		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Woore, Candle Lane Watching Brief 2011 (WCL11)	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was carried out on a stripped area of access roads for a new housing estate. In addition, an area approximately 15m x 40m was stripped to investigate the remains of two dwellings shown on the 1838 tithe map. Within the area of the road network the remains of two recent boundary ditches and one boundary hedge were encountered. Four heavily disturbed features associated with a single dwelling were recorded, and pottery dating to 18th-19th centuries was recovered from the area excavated to examine the dwelling.	
Project type	Archaeological watching brief	
Site status	-	
Previous work	Desk based assessment	
Current Land use	Pasture	
Future work	None	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds	Cistercian ware 'salt-lady' figurine	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Shropshire	
Site address	Bloor Homes Development, Candle Lane, Woore, Shropshire	
Study area	1ha overall	
OS Easting & Northing	SJ 7275 4255	
Height OD	145m AOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Paul Gajos, CgMs Consulting	
Project Design originator	Paul Gajos, CgMs Consulting	
Director/Supervisor	Steve Parry, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Steve Parry, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	Bloor Homes	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	05/09/11	
End date	29/09/11	
ARCHIVES	Location:	Content
Physical	SHRMS: E.00243	Pottery
Paper	SHRMS: E.00243	1 site file
Digital	SHRMS: E.00243	
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	An Archaeological watching brief at Candle Lane, Woore, Shropshire, September 2011	
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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT CANDLE LANE, WOORE, SHROPSHIRE
SEPTEMBER 2011**

Abstract

In September 2011, Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook a watching brief at land off Candle Lane, Woore, Shropshire. The work was carried out during groundworks associated with roads for a new housing estate. In addition, an area was stripped to investigate the location and preservation of two dwellings shown on the 1838 tithe map. Within the area of the road network the remains of two boundary ditches and one boundary hedge were encountered. Four heavily disturbed features associated with a single dwelling were recorded and pottery dating to 18th and 19th centuries was recovered from the area excavated to examine the dwellings.

1 INTRODUCTION

In September 2011 an archaeological watching brief was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) during groundworks associated with access roads for a new housing estate at land off Candle Lane, Woore, North Shropshire (NGR: SJ 7275 4255) (Fig 1). In addition, an area approximately 15m x 40m was stripped to investigate the remains of two dwellings shown on the 1838 tithe map. The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Bloor Homes. The scope of the works was outlined within the specification brief prepared by CgMs Consulting in February 2011 (Gajos 2011) and approved by the Historic Environment Officer for Shropshire County Council. The objective of the watching brief was to determine the presence of any archaeological features within the area of the brief and to preserve by record any significant archaeological remains.

This report has been prepared to meet the requirements of the brief and complies with Appendix 4 of the English Heritage procedural document *Management of Archaeological Project 2* (EH 1991), relevant sections of *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (EH 2006) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

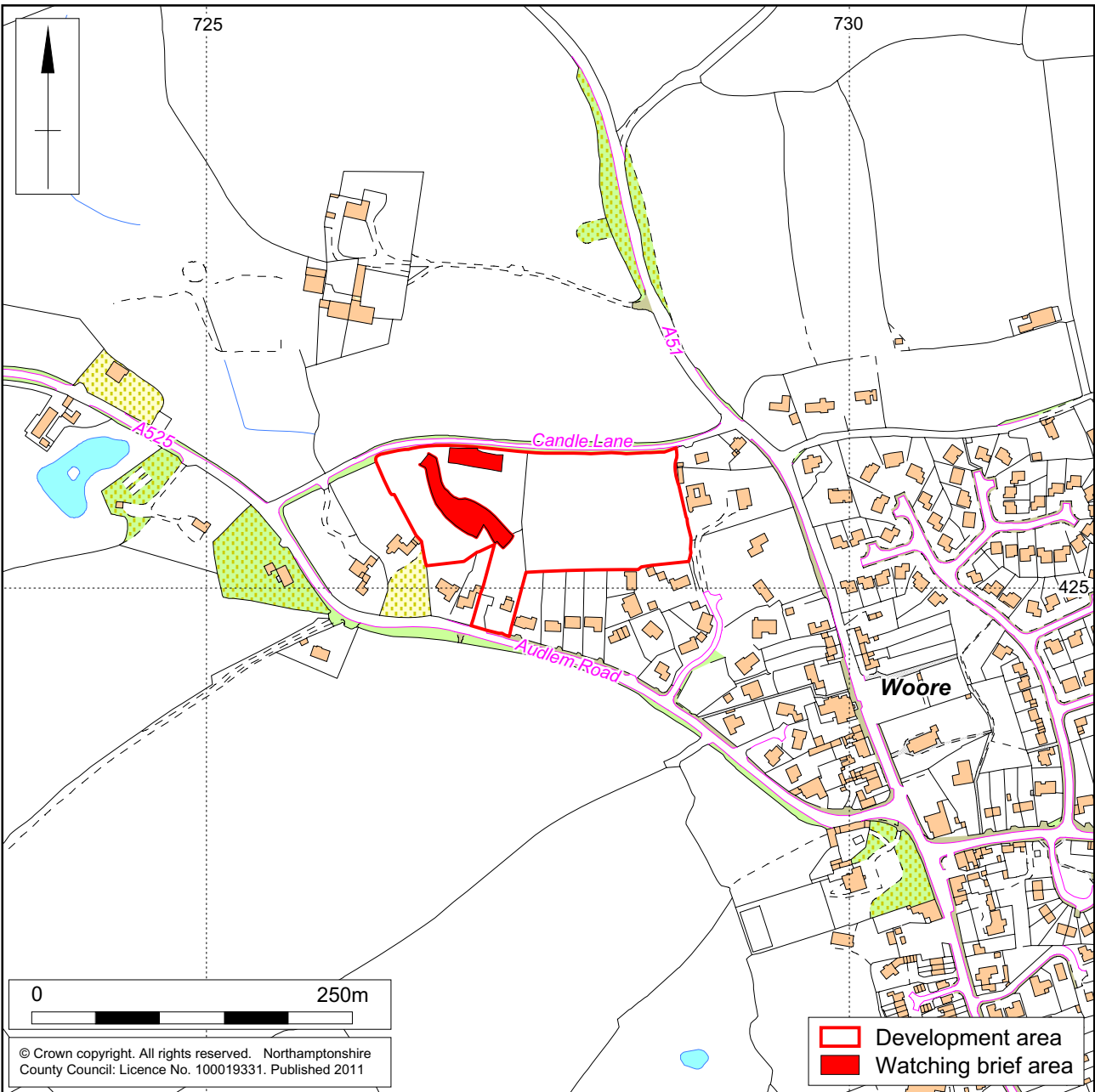
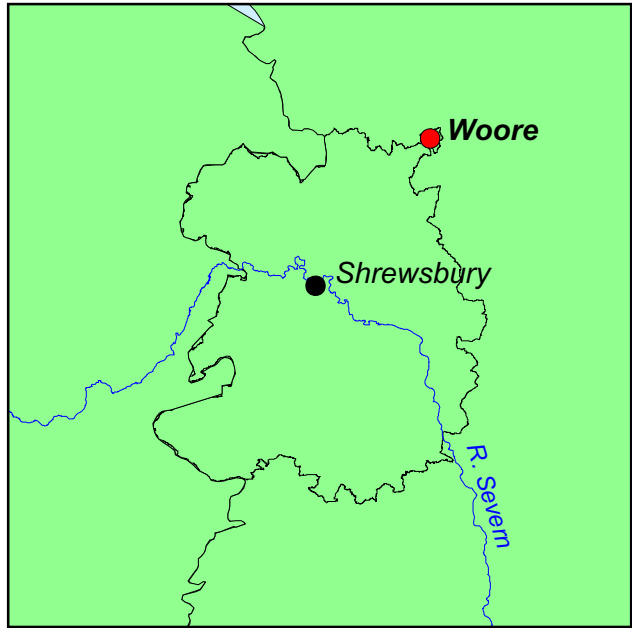
The site lies to the north-west of the village of Woore within North Shropshire (Fig 1). The site covers an area of approximately 2.0ha, bordered by residential properties to the east, south and west and is bounded by Candle Lane to the north.

The site lies on fairly flat ground at around 145m aOD. However, there is a pronounced slope to the north, leading down to Candle Lane of 1-2m. The geology of the site consists of Devensian glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel overlying mudstone bedrock, although only sand was encountered during the watching brief.

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

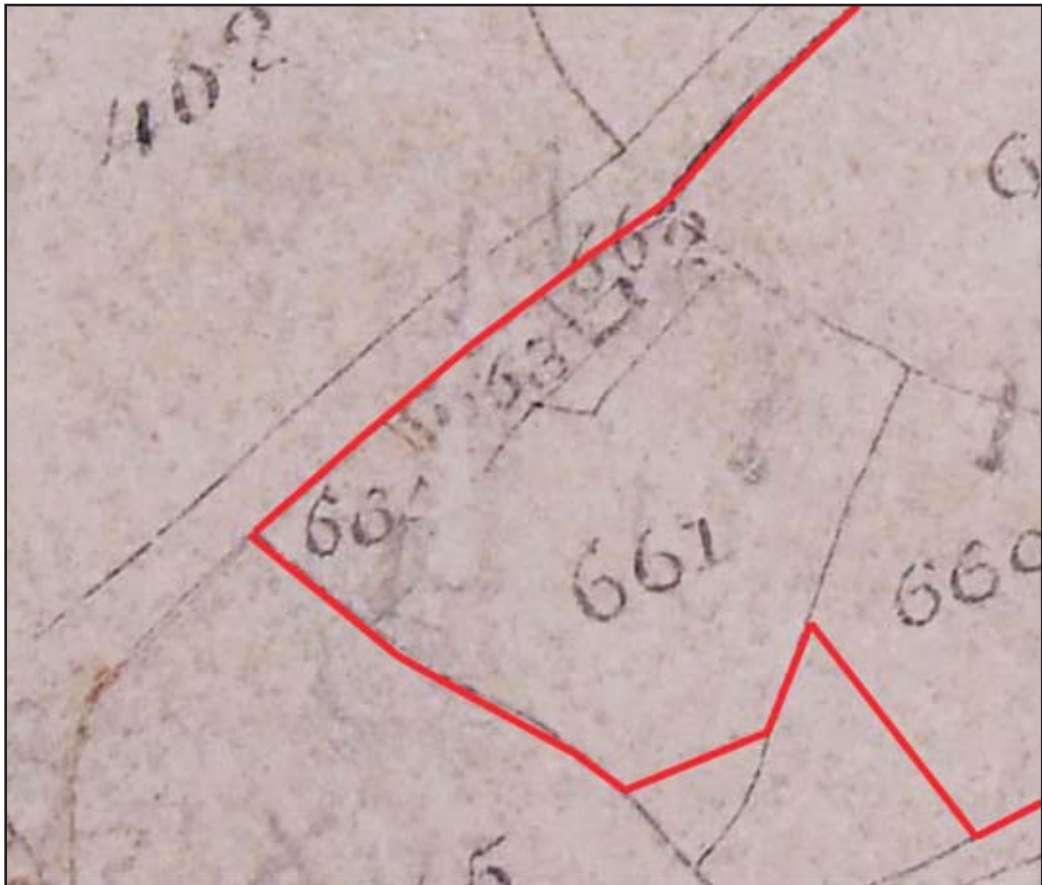
The desk-based assessment showed that no prehistoric or Roman activity has been recorded within the survey area (Gajos 2010). Despite being located approximately 120m from the Scheduled Monument of Sillenhurst moated site and fishpond (SM No 32304) there is no evidence of any Saxon or medieval activity on the site including no medieval ridge and furrow.

The 1838 tithe map (Fig 2) of the area depicts two buildings on the northern boundary of the site (Gajos 2010). Both of these plots are recorded within the tithe apportionment as 662 & 663 (house and garden) of which only 663 is recorded as being occupied. Plot 662 is recorded as Void possibly indicating that this plot has been either fallen into disuse by the time of the tithe map or was no longer extant. Neither of these buildings is shown on the 1880 Ordnance Survey suggesting they were no longer in use or visible at this date.



Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1



Mucklestone tithe map 1838 and detail Fig 2

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The general aims of the project as outlined within the specification were:

- to determine the presence or otherwise of buried remains of archaeological interest within the development area;
- to preserve by record any significant archaeological remains within the development area and to attempt to reconstruction of the history and use of the site.

Site specific research aims were:

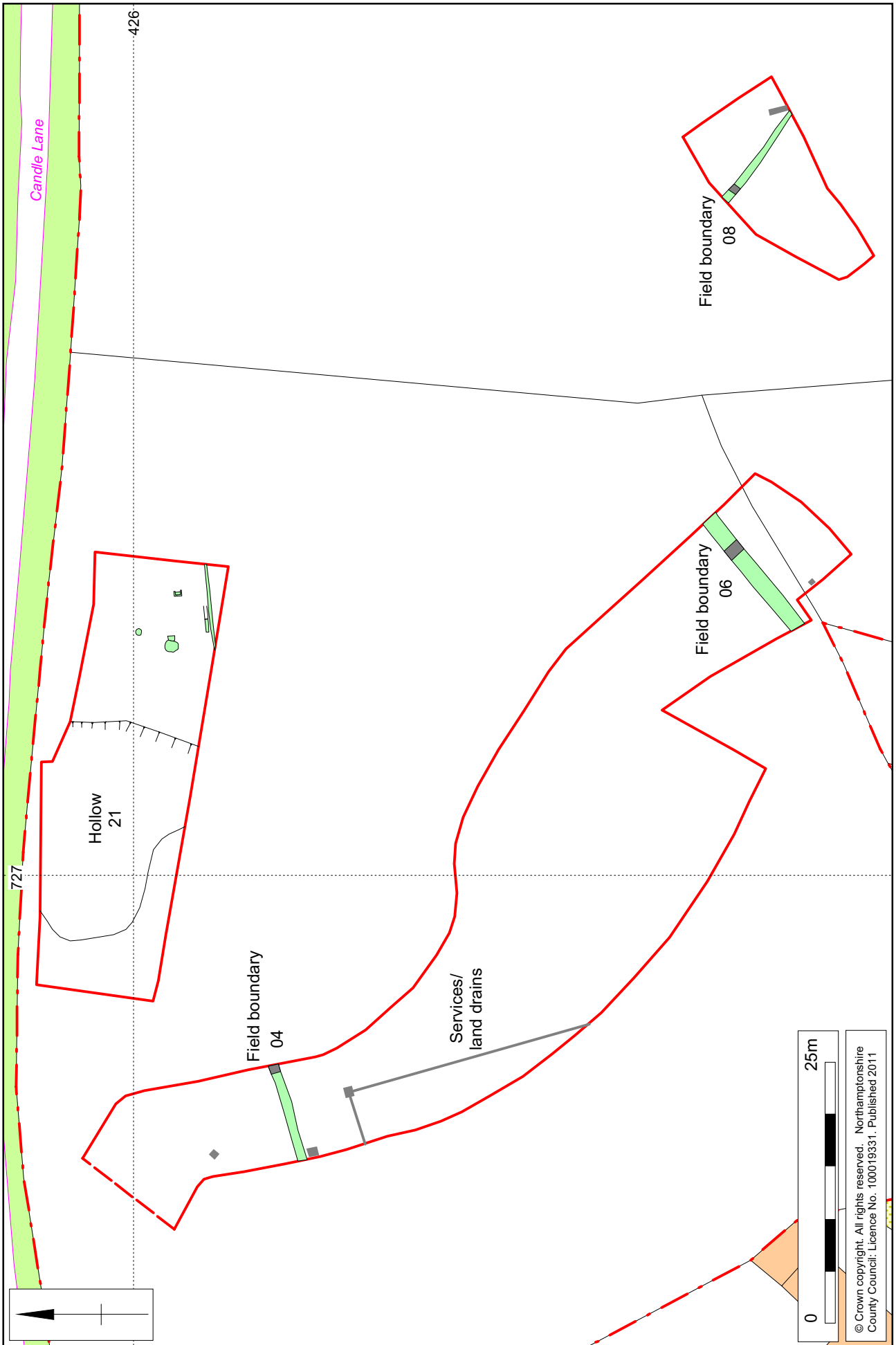
- to identify any remains of the two buildings represented on the 1838 tithe map;
- to identify the date and construction of the two buildings to place the site within the context of similar sites.

4 METHODOLOGY

The area of the road network was surveyed by the principal contractor and set out with grid pegs to establish the centre of the road (Fig 1). Clearance commenced from the north-west corner of the site to the south-east. The topsoil and subsoil was stripped to the first archaeological level or underlying geology under archaeological supervision using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket.

The rectangular area to the north, intended to expose any extant remains of the two houses shown on the 1838 tithe map, was laid out using measuring tapes offset from the northern boundary to Candle Lane. As with the area of the access roads, the topsoil and subsoil was stripped using a 360° mechanical excavator to the first level of archaeology. Features present at this level were then cleaned and recorded in plan followed by further stripping of the area to the natural geology; to ensure no archaeological features were present below.

The cleaning of archaeological surfaces and features, excavation and recording was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching briefs* (IfA 2008).



Scale 1:500

Watching brief areas and archaeological features

Fig 3

5 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

5.1 Area of road network

The geology encountered was sand that varied in character across the stripped area from loose mid grey-yellow, mid grey-red to friable white sand.

The depth of topsoil across the site varied from 0.30-0.40m, with approximately 40% of the area covered with a mid reddish-yellow silty wash measuring an average of 0.15m thick. The area stripped for the road network (Fig 3) contained two modern ceramic land drains, running south-west to north-east down the gentle slope of the field, punctuated by two stone filled soak-away pits, each approximately 1.0m square.

Excavation confirmed the presence of three boundary features shown on the 1889 Ordnance Survey map, two boundary ditches [04] and [06] were recorded within the western half of the site and the remains of a boundary hedgerow (08).

The northern boundary ditch [04] had a U-shaped profile, and was 1.3m wide by 0.5m deep (Fig 4). The fill consisted of a red-brown sandy loam containing ceramic building material and occasional charcoal flecks.



Boundary ditch [04], looking north-east Fig 4

Boundary ditch [06], aligned north-east to south-west, had a U-shaped profile and a flat base (Fig 5). The fill (07) comprised a dark brownish-grey sandy loam containing ceramic building material and pottery dated to the 19th century. A length of 13m was recorded within the excavated area, and the ditch continued beyond the limit of excavation.

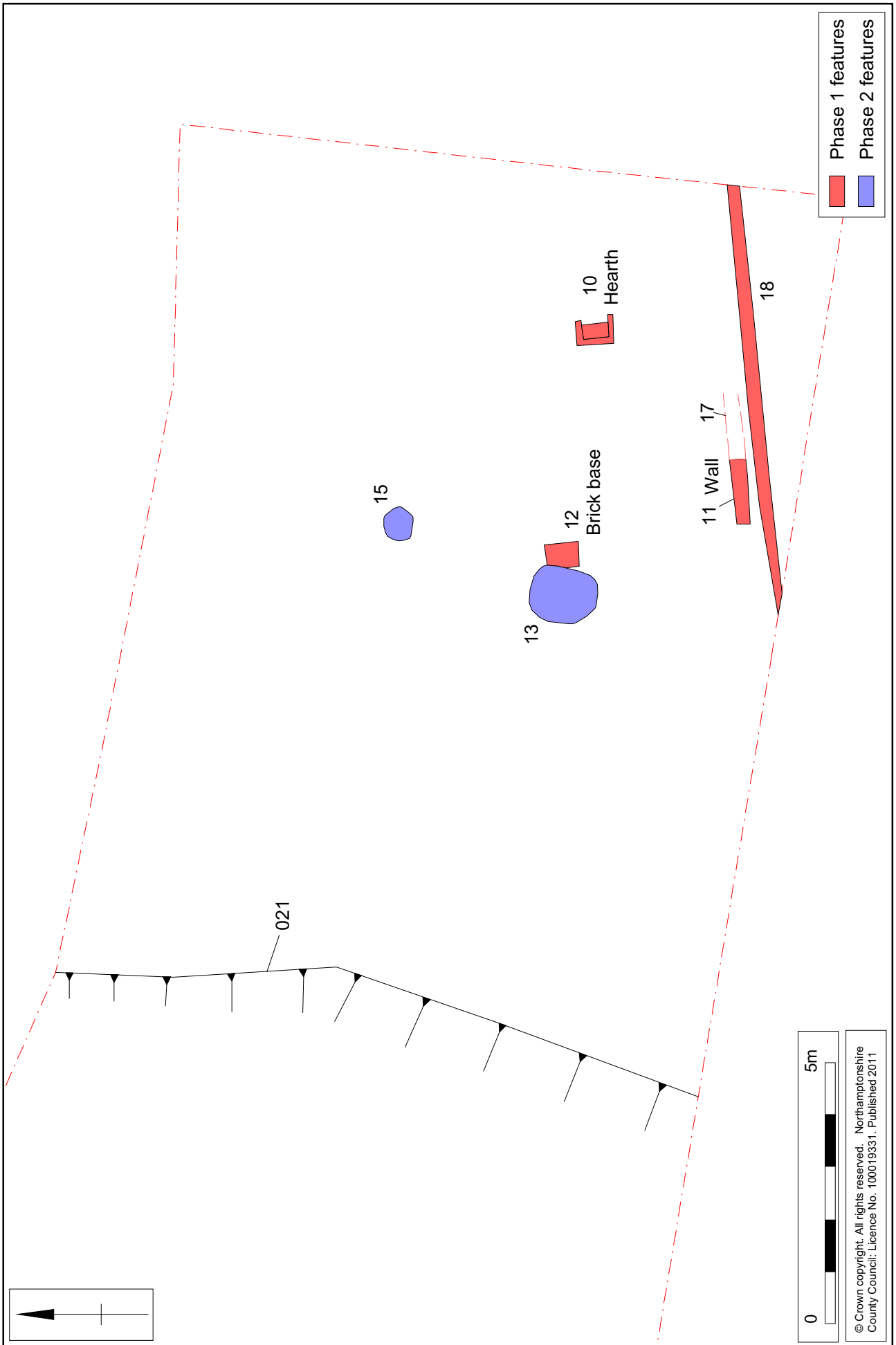
Also present were the remains of an undated hedge line (Fig 6). The hedge line (08) was aligned north-south, with a shallow and irregular profile due to root action, and was filled with dark brown friable silty loam, overlain by subsoil (02) and topsoil (01).



Boundary ditch [06], looking north Fig 5



Remains of boundary hedge line (08), looking north Fig 6



Scale 1:100

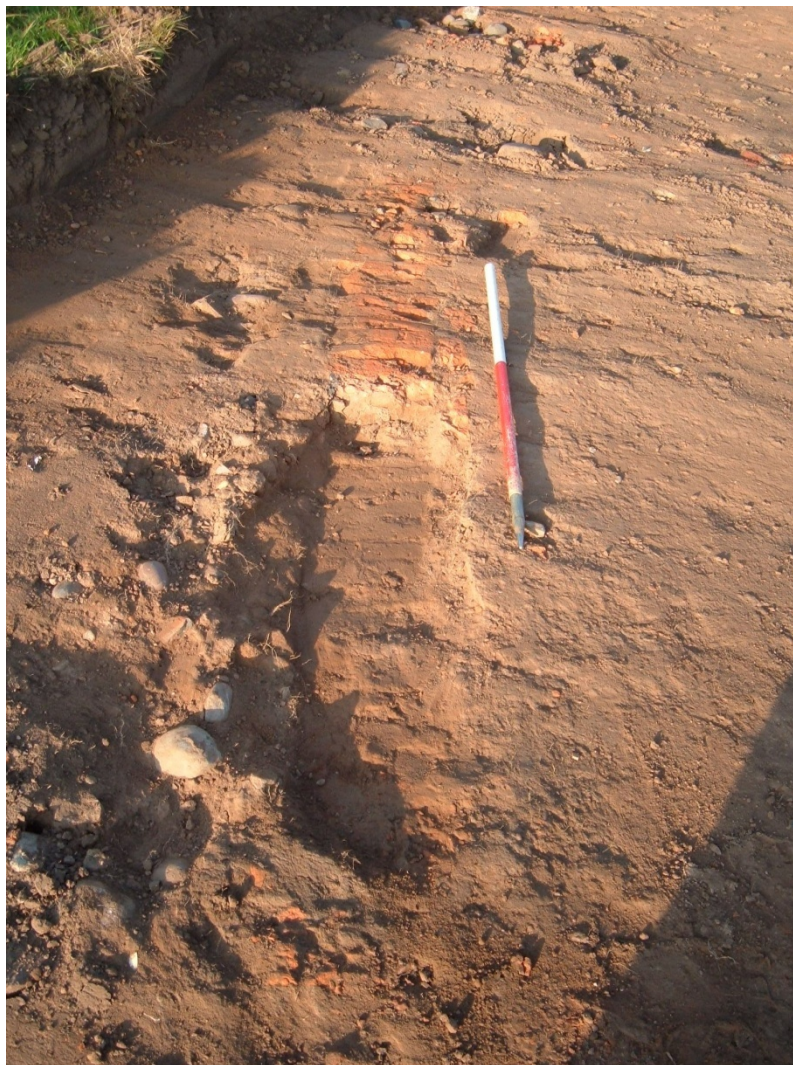
Archaeological features in the northern area Fig 7

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5.2 Rectangular area bordering Candle Lane

The excavation of the rectangular area bordering Candle Lane revealed six features, four of which, thought to be remains of the former dwelling, were cut into a layer of leveling make up material consisting of reddish-brown sand (09). Within the excavated area there was a hollow [21] 15m wide, 0.7m deep and containing a mix of redeposited natural sand and topsoil. It extended beyond the limits of excavation to the north and south (Fig 7).

To the south-west there was the remains of the foundation of a brick wall [11], aligned north-east to south-west. A 1.25m length survived as a single course of bricks, but its line could be traced for a further 1.2m. Alongside the wall was a stone-filled drain [18] (Fig 8), 0.25m wide and 9.1m long.



Remains of brick wall [11] and stone-filled drain [18], looking south-west Fig 8

To the north of the wall there was a rectangular hearth constructed from eleven half-bricks, surviving one course deep, measuring 0.72m by 0.48m (Fig 9). The fill of the hearth (20) was dark grey silty sand containing approximately 60% charcoal; characterising a burnt surface within the hearth.



Remains of hearth [10] and burned surface (20), looking south-west Fig 9

A rectangular brick base [12] to the west of the hearth, measured 0.63m by 0.47m and was, again, a single course in depth. The north-west corner was truncated by a circular pit [13], 1.2m in diameter and filled with broken brick and rounded stones similar to those filling the drain [18] (Fig 10).

Another pit, lying to the north [15], was 0.64m in diameter, filled with broken bricks and stones within mixed red and brown sand (Fig 11). Both of the brick-lined pits appear to postdate the demolition of the building.



Brick base [12] and brick-filled demolition pit [13], looking south Fig 10



Brick-filled pit [15], looking south

Fig 11

6 POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY by Iain Soden

A total of 32 sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered in nine different wares or types. These break down as follows, identified to type and weighed (g).

Table 1: Quantification of post-medieval pottery

Type/context	Production date range	1 No/wt(g)	5 No/wt(g)	7 No/wt(g)	9 No/wt(g)	Total No/wt(g)
Cistercian ware	16th century	-	-	-	1/150g	1/150g
Slipware	c1680-1740	1/19g	-	-	-	1/19g
White salt glazed stoneware	c1720-80	-	1/9g	-	-	1/9g
Midland Black	c1650-1800	3/16g	-	-	1/20g	4/36g
Pancheon/butter pot	19th century	5/324g	-	1/80g	8/615g	14/1019g
Pearlware	c1780-1830	1/5g	-	-	-	1/5g
Blue shell-edged pearlware	c1800-20	-	-	-	2/35g	2/35g
Transfer-printed earthenware	19th-20th centuries	1/4g	1/25g	-	-	2/29g
Glazed earthenware	19th-20th centuries	4/35g	1/6g	-	1/47g	6/88g
Total		15/403g	3/40g	1/80g	13/867g	32/1390g

Most of the above types are unremarkable, being found on all domestic sites across the midlands in the 18th-19th centuries. The one exception is the large sherd of a simply-formed but rare Cistercian-type ware figurine – a salt lady, holding a shallow open tray for the salt (Figs 12 and 13). These were first highlighted as a Cistercian Ware product by Peter Brears (1971) in his seminal Cistercian Ware form-type series, but are rarely found. As a three-hundred-year old object in a 19th-century assemblage it is clearly residual but it is possible that the figure was retained as an heirloom. This particular one is not well potted but carries the distinctive bichrome glaze decoration borne of two clay-types being used, the so-called Cistercian and reversed-Cistercian fabrics, the second of which is white- or yellow-firing under a clear glaze against the red or black body.

Otherwise the assemblage is too small to be of use in looking at the site's use, other than to confirm that these are domestic wares found in many kitchen/dining/pantry contexts.



Pottery 'salt-lady' figurine
(Scale 20mm)



Fig 12 Modern reproduction salt ladies by John Hudson
(<http://www.hudsonclaypotter.co.uk>) Fig 13

7 DISCUSSION

The archaeological watching brief of the road network confirmed the existence of three boundaries shown on the 1880 Ordnance Survey map. These boundaries are not present on the 1835 tithe map and the pottery indicates that their filling was no earlier than the 19th century.

Within the area to the north of the site bordering Candle Lane there were remnants of a brick building, and the pottery assemblage indicates that occupation dates from the mid-18th century onward. A single wall remnant [11], a drain [18], a hearth [10] and a brick base [12] were the only surviving parts of this dwelling. The removal of building materials from the site post-demolition is evident from the lack of overburden and structural material within the topsoil. This is supported by the character of the two circular pits [13] and [15], the fills of which contained only broken brick. The Cistercian ware figurine, which dates to the 16th century, the single earlier piece, may have been a family heirloom.

No evidence of a second dwelling was found. However, its position as shown on the 1835 map would place it in the same area as the large hollow [21], which lay to the west of the building remnants (Fig 3). The 1880 map (Gagos 2010, fig 7), and later maps, show the presence of large sand pits in fields to both the north and south of the site, so it is possible that any remnants of the second demolished building had been removed by the digging of a sand pit, hollow [21], in the late 19th century.

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