



Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation of
land at Longridge, Church Walk

Harrold, Bedfordshire

Accession No: BEDFM:2009:48

July 2009



Jim Burke and Amir Bassir

August 2009
(Revised September 2009)

Report 09/104

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Northamptonshire
County Council

LONGRIDGE, CHURCH WALK, HARROLD

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
AUGUST 2009**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION
OF LAND AT LONGRIDGE, CHURCH WALK
HARROLD, BEDFORDSHIRE
JULY 2009**

INTERIM REPORT

Accession number: BEDFM:2009.48

REPORT 09/104

NGR SP 0952 0568

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Roman pottery	Tora Hylton
Medieval and post-medieval pottery	Iain Soden
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QUALITY CONTROL

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LONGRIDGE, CHURCH WALK, HARROLD

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Archaeological evaluation on land at Longridge, Church Walk, Harrold, Bedfordshire.	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land proposed for housing, at Longridge, Church Walk, Harrold, Bedfordshire. The evaluation identified several pits and gullies containing Late Iron Age and Romano-British pottery and animal bone. There was also evidence of medieval and post-medieval activity, however modern disturbance caused by tree-planting, unidentified services and foundations have affected much of the surviving archaeology.	
Project type (e.g. DBA, evaluation etc)	Trial trench evaluation	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	None	
Current Land use	Housing	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/period		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Bedfordshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Longridge, Church Walk, Harrold	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	0.004763 ha	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	SP 0952 0568	
Height OD	34m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Heritage and environment section, Bedfordshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Jim Burke	
Project Manager	Steve Parry	
Sponsor or funding body	Resolution Homes Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	15 July 2009	
End date	17 July 2009	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	BEDFM:2009:48	Finds including pottery and bone.
Paper		Site Records, black and white/ colour slide and digital photographs
Digital		Figures and Illustrations, Report
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	An Archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Longridge, Church Walk, Harrold, Bedfordshire, July 2009	
Serial title & volume	09/104	
Author(s)	Jim Burke and Amir Bassir	
Page numbers		
Date		

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION
OF LAND AT LONGRIDGE, HARROLD
BEDFORDSHIRE
JULY 2009**

INTERIM REPORT

ABSTRACT

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out a trial trench evaluation on land proposed for housing development at Longridge, Church Walk, Harrold, Bedfordshire in order to determine the archaeological potential of the site. Several pits and gullies were identified and dated to the Late Iron Age and Romano-British period. There was also evidence of medieval and post-medieval activity. However, modern disturbance caused by tree-planting, unidentified services and foundations have affected much of the surviving archaeology.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological evaluation, comprising trial trench excavation during July on land at Longridge, Church Walk, Harrold, Bedfordshire (NGR: SP 9520 5650; Fig 1).

The work was commissioned by Resolution Homes Ltd in order to fulfil a planning application with regard to the erection of two dwellings with separate garages, following the demolition of an existing single-storey building set back from the High Street. The evaluation met the requirements of a specification prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology dated 6 July 2009, which was in turn prepared in response to a brief issued by Heritage and Environment Section, Culture and Environment Group, Bedfordshire County Council (HESCEGBCC, Vs 1, 28 June 2008).

The objective of the archaeological evaluation was to establish the location, extent, nature and date, of any archaeological features or deposits present on the development site, placing it within its local, regional and national archaeological context and to recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region. Any constraints for further archaeological fieldwork including areas of disturbance and service locations etc were also defined.

The development area lies adjacent to the High Street within the core of the village and is within an area of archaeological sensitivity. Previous archaeological excavations within and around Harrold have demonstrated the existence of extensive archaeological deposits dating from the prehistoric through to the medieval periods.

Topographically the site lies within the valley of the River Great Ouse which flows to the south of the village. The development site is on largely level ground at a height of approximately 34m aOD. The underlying geology comprises Great Oolitic Limestone.

2 METHODOLOGY

Two trenches, 12.5m long by 1.80m wide were located within the footprint of each of the proposed developments, north and south of the current dwelling (Fig 2). Trench 1 was aligned north to south in front and Trench 2 aligned east to west at the rear of the current dwelling. Both were excavated using a 3 ton mechanical 360 digger, fitted with a 1.2m toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation proceeded as far as the upper surface of the natural substrate, which consisted of gravel with patches of stiff sand.

3 EVALUATION RESULTS

3.1 Trench 1

The earliest feature in Trench 1 was a shallow gully [112] running east to west, 0.80m wide and 0.16m deep (Fig 3, Plan 1 and Section 9). It was filled with mid orange brown silty loam (113) with gravel, charcoal flecks. A posthole [110] just to the north of the gully had a diameter of 0.40m. The fill (111) was the same as (113), and contained shelly coarseware pottery dated to the 12th century and a sherd of Midland blackware of 18th-century date. (Fig 3, Plan 1, Section 6).

At the centre of the trench was part of a recent soakaway pit (106), aligned east to west, 2.25m at the widest point, the remainder lying to the west.

North of the soakaway, near the boundary wall, there was a high level of root disturbance. A shallow posthole [114], extending beyond the eastern limit of the trench, had a diameter of c 0.60m and contained a fill (115) of mid brown loam with sandy orange inclusions and two sherds of shelly coarseware pottery dated to the 12th century.

A length of 5.85m at the northern end of the trench was part of the current front garden of the present dwelling. Overlying the natural was subsoil (105), a mid brown loam with sandy orange inclusions, 0.30m thick. A layer of dark loamy garden soil (104), up to 0.40m thick, overlay the subsoil. This is probably the original garden soil as all the layers above (103, 102 and 101) are re-deposited.

At the north end of layer (103), a concentration of gravel and sandstone fragments mixed in with a sandy loam mid brown soil, filtered out to a sandy-loam soil with the occasional larger fragments of natural sandstone, up to 0.19m thick. This was overlaid by a secondary rich organic mid brown garden soil (102), with inclusions of charcoal, small shattered pottery (plant pots) and vermiculite, up to 0.36m thick. The topsoil (101) was similar to (102), but richer in organic remains with composted remains throughout, and was up to 0.58m thick.

The southern end of the trench was cut into the yard of the current dwelling, which had been block paved. Overlying the natural was subsoil (105), up to 0.38m thick. A dark brown re-deposited silty clay soil (107) overlay the subsoil. The drainage for the extensive blocked paved area had broken drain pipes under the surface and drainage seeping into the ground had caused the build up of a silt layer (106) at a depth of 0.30m. Services, including drainage and electricity were present in this layer. Grade one chippings were used to level the area at 0.20m thickness. Similar material formed the upper fill of the soakaway in the centre of the trench. Coarse building sand (109), 0.05m thick, levelled the area for the laying of the block paving. Concrete paving slabs

measuring 0.45m x 0.45m x 0.04m were used to edge the yard. The main paved area had been laid with blocks 0.20m x 0.10m x 0.05m.

3.2 Trench 2

To the west there were two shallow gullies [217], c 0.50m wide, and [219], c 0.80m wide, running north-east to south-west (Fig 4, Plan 2; Fig 5, Section 8). Both were filled with dark grey-brown sandy silts with gravel and occasional charcoal flecks (216) and (218). The two features were parallel and intercutting, although it was not clear which was the earlier although Late Iron Age pottery was found in fill (216) gully [217] and Romano-British pottery in fill (218) of gully [219] with animal bone. Fill (218) was cut by a circular pit or ditch terminal [215], with fill (214) of dark grey-brown sandy silt with patches of mottled grey-blue scorched clay (Fig 4, Plan 2; Fig 5, Section 7). The top of this fill had been highly disturbed by root activity. The feature contained an abundance of large fragments Romano-British pottery and animal bone. The bottom of this feature was not reached since it did not fall within the trench limit.

Adjacent to [215] was pit or ditch terminal [213], which was at least 0.80m deep and was filled with a mid, dark grey-brown sandy silt loam with gravel (212) containing Roman pottery and animal bone (Fig 4, Plan 2; Fig 5, Section 4). This feature was cut to the east by a modern trench roughly 0.50m wide and containing large rock fragments and gravel.

At the east end of the trench were a series of ditches and gullies. Gully [211] curved in from the north-east with a fill (210) of mid orange-brown sandy silt with poorly sorted gravel (Fig 4, Plan 2; Fig 5, Section 3). This fill contained Roman pottery as well as animal bone and a single iron nail. Further east was a shallow gully [205], about 0.20m deep, running north to south and filled with mid grey-brown sandy silt (204), which contained fragments of Roman pottery and animal bone.

These gullies were probably were cut by ditch [209], which was 0.90m deep and ran approximately east-west. The Primary fill (208) was a dark grey-brown sandy silt, c 0.20m thick, with occasional gravel and contained Roman pottery as well as animal bone. This was overlain by a thin layer (207), 0.06m thick, of mid orange-brown silty sand. The secondary and upper fill (206), c 0.70m thick, was a mid grey-brown sandy silt with dark grey streaks resulting from root activity and contained Roman pottery and animal bone.

Overlying all the features was a layer of subsoil (202) which varied between 0.50-0.60m thick and was composed of dark grey-brown sandy silt loam and a top soil (201), up to 0.30m thick, which consisted of dark grey-brown silt loam with high organic content. Both layers were highly disturbed by vegetation and root activity.

At 2.0m from the western edge of the trench there was an electric pipe running north to south and cutting (218).

4 THE POTTERY

4.1 The Iron Age pottery by Andy Chapman

A total of 10 sherds of pottery, weighing 393g, come from thick-walled hand-built vessels of Iron Age date. All of the material comes from a single context, the fill (216) of gully [217]. This feature also produced transitional pottery of the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age, the early decades of the 1st century AD, and a single sherd of Samian ware. As the Iron Age sherds are large and well preserved, with a sherd weight of 39g, it is most probable that these vessels are Iron Age forms still being utilised in the early 1st century AD, rather than residual sherds from an earlier episode of activity.

All of the hand-built vessels are in a fabric containing either dense or sparse crushed shell. The core is light or dark grey and the external surfaces are most commonly bright orange, while three sherds have grey to brown external surfaces. All sherds have brown to grey internal surfaces, and they are all from thick-walled vessels, 11-16mm thick.

Nine sherds are plain body sherds, and there is a single upright, flat-topped rim sherd from a globular vessel. The sherds could come from as little as two vessels, both of which would have been large storage jars, and this reinforces the suggestion that they were not residual in their context.

4.2 The Late Iron Age/ Roman pottery by Tora Hylton

Introduction

The excavation produced 333 sherds of Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery with a combined weight of 6.28kg (see Table 1). The pottery was recovered from 8 individual deposits in Trench 2 (204, 206, 208, 210, 212, 214, 216, 218). In addition, a further ten sherds were recovered from the subsoil deposits overlying Trench 2. Much of the pottery derived from a complex of features at the east end of the trench (62.5% by weight), while smaller quantities were recovered from the linear gullies and pits at the western end (37.5%). One small pit [215] (241) produced an almost complete grog-tempered jar.

The condition of the pottery is variable, in some cases, particularly with regard to the grog-tempered wares, surface preservation is not good and some sherds display signs of abrasion. The overall average sherd weight is reasonably high for a Late Iron Age/Roman assemblage at 18.8g.

The pottery was sorted by fabric, the sherds were counted and the weight recorded for each context. In the interests of continuity, the fabrics have been catalogued according to Browns report on the kilns at Harrold (1994), where the types conform to the published type series for Milton Keynes (Marney 1989), although Bedfordshire Type Series references are also provided (Beds). Where possible references have been made to previously illustrated forms in Brown (1994), Marney (1998) and Thompsons Typology of 'Belgic' Late Iron Age forms (1982).

The assemblage

Most of the pottery appears to be of local origin and is represented by transitional forms in grog-tempered (52.8% by weight) and shell-gritted fabrics (42.8%) which date from the early/mid 1st through to the 2nd century. In addition there is a small amount

of greyware (Beds R06) and two sherds of imported Samian (R01). There is no pottery dating later than the 2nd century.

Grog-tempered wares (MK Fabric 46/Beds F06) dominate the assemblage, slight variations in the fabrics were observed, but these generally related to a slightly higher percentage of sand or shell being present in some of the fabrics (Beds F09 & F05). Forms represented include, wide-mouthed jars (Marney fig 35, 43), jars with plain everted rims (Thompson Type B1-1), and lid seating (Thompson B1-6). Other forms include cordoned cups/beakers, jars with shoulder cordons and part of a base sherd from a pedestal beaker ornamented with wavy line motif. Decorative techniques include vertical combing and wavy lines and burnishing.

The shell-gritted wares (MK Fabric 1/Beds R13) are most probably sourced locally from a group of kilns sited just 2km south-west of the village of Harrold and excavated by Anthony Brown (1994). The forms represented conform to Browns Phase 2 types, there are large storage jars with fine and coarse vertical combing and/or shoulder grooves (1994, fig 22, 8), and a variety of lid-seated/channel-rim forms, these are characteristically, plain (Thompson Type C5-1, Brown, fig 25, 43), with diagonal slashed decoration (Thompson Type C5-2, Brown fig 25,45), or with a double-channel on the rim (Brown 1994, fig 24, 38). Other forms include a bowl/lid (Brown 1994, fig 40,366). Decorative techniques include, horizontal rilling, vertical and or horizontal combing (Brown 1994, fig 23, 13, 17).

With the exception of fragments from two small jars with everted rims, the assemblage of greyware sherds (R06) comprises undiagnostic body sherds.

Finally, there are two small sherds of imported Samian (R01), comprising part of a rim sherd, possibly from a Dragendorff Type 31R (Webster 1996, page 34) and a fragment from a footring.

Table 1: The Late Iron Age and Roman pottery

Pottery fabric	Grog-tempered (Beds F06)		Grog/sand tempered (F09)		Grog/shell tempered (F05)		Shell-gritted (R13)		Grey ware (R06)		Samian (R01)		Totals	
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)
202 layer	-	-	4	42	-	-	4	120	2	75	-	-	10	237
204/205	10	132	1	12			15	534	5	87	-	-	31	765
206/208	83	1048	6	56	2	26	75	1322	11	74	-	-	177	2526
208/209	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	-	1	4
210/211	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	478	1	6	1	1	11	485
212/213	2	9	1	17	-	-	3	67	-	-	-	-	6	93
214/215	53	1726	-	-	-	-	7	40	1	11	-	-	61	1777
216/217	19	182	-	-	-	-	7	120	1	10	1	3	28	315
218/219	6	52	-	-	-	-	2	24	-	-	-	-	8	76

4.3 Medieval and post-medieval pottery by Iain Soden

A total of twelve sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered as shown in Table 1.

Table 2: Medieval and post-medieval pottery

Cut type/fill	Shelly Coarseware	Midland blackware	Unglazed earthenware
110 posthole /111	8	1	-
114 posthole /115	2	-	-
Trench 1 U/S	-	-	1

The medieval material comprised solely Shelly Coarseware which is ubiquitous in the area and was part of a long tradition. It suggests occupation in the period c1100-1300. Two sherds are rim sherds, one (from 111) being from a wide-mouthed bowl, perhaps of later in this date range. The other is fragmentary and not diagnostic. The tradition takes in St Neots-type ware which commenced in the 9th century and continued well into the 12th century and across the East Midlands. The kiln source is equivocal. In terms of the Bedfordshire type series the sherds belong to the tradition B01/B07 while in Northamptonshire they belong to types 100/330. The single sherd of 18th-century Midland Blackware is probably intrusive in this context. A single large sherd of unglazed earthenware is from a distinctive form of 19th- and early 20th-century horticultural ware, the seed pan, essentially a wide, shallow flower pot. In modern times it has been replaced by the seed tray, first wooden and then plastic.

The pottery is not of significance except in terms of providing information on relative dating.

5 THE ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

5.1 The animal bone by Karen Deighton

A total of 873g of animal bone was collected by hand during the course of excavation. This material was assessed to ascertain the condition of the bone, the species present and potential contribution to the understanding of the site and to inform on future collection strategies.

The animal bone was scanned and identifiable elements were noted (following Halstead 1985 after Watson 1979). Preservation and modification (after Binford 1981) were also noted. Any available biometrical data (after von den Driesch 1976) was noted as was any available ageing data. Ageing data included state of fusion (after Silver 1969), neonatal bone (after Amorosi 1982) and tooth eruption and wear (after Payne 1973 for *Ovicaprids* and Halstead 1985 after Payne 1973 for *Bos*).

Preservation

Fragmentation and surface abrasion were moderate. Five instances of canid gnawing were noted. The low frequency of both surface abrasion and canid gnawing could suggest bone was rapidly buried after disposal, although with such a small assemblage this is tentative. No evidence for butchery was noted.

The taxa present

The most abundant taxa present was sheep/goat (*ovicaprid*) followed by cattle (*bos*) with much smaller quantities of pig (*sus*), domestic fowl (*gallus*) and goose (*anser*) (Table 2).

Table 3: Taxa by context

Cut type/ fill	<i>Bos</i> cattle	<i>Ovicaprid</i> Sheep/ goat	<i>Sus</i> pig	<i>Gallus</i> fowl	<i>Anser</i> goose	<i>Avis</i> sp. bird	Large ungulate	Total
205Gully/ 204	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
209Ditch/ 206	1	6	-	-	-	2	-	9
209Ditch/ 208	2	5	-	-	-	2	-	9
211Gully/ 210	3	-	-	1	1	-	2	7
213 Pit/ 212	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
217Gully/ 216	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
219Gully/ 218	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Totals	7	15	1	1	1	4	2	31

Fill (214) pit [215] had indeterminate bone fragments only.

Ageing and metrical data

Table 4: The availability of ageing and metrical data

Bos (cattle)	Ovicaprid (sheep/goat)		
Toothwear	Toothwear	Fusion	Measurements
1	2	2	1

Discussion and potential

Little can be said of the animal economy of the site, due to the paucity of material, other than that a small range of common domesticates were utilised. The reasonable level of preservation, identifiability (approx 75% of fragments could be identified) and the availability of ageing data suggests that the collection of further material from dateable/phaseable contexts, should further excavation take place, would provide information on the animal economy of the site.

5.2 Charred plant remains by Karen Deighton

Method

A single 10 litre soil sample was collected by hand from Trench 2 fill (214) pit [215] during the course of excavation. The material was processed in a modified siraf tank fitted with a 500micron mesh and 250micron flot sieve. The resulting flot was dried and examined under a microscope (10x magnification).

Results

Preservation was moderate. Ecofacts were heavily abraded and fragmented which adversely affected identification.

Finds were as follows

- 17 wheat/barley (Triticum/Hordeum) grains
- 43 indeterminate cereal grains
- 1 indeterminate pulse
- Approximately 200 heavily fragmented charcoal pieces.

6 DISCUSSION

The trial trench evaluation at Longridge, Harrold has demonstrated survival of archaeological features of Late Iron Age to early Roman date. There was also evidence of medieval and post-medieval activity. Modern disturbance caused by tree-planting and an unidentified services and foundations feature was evident along the width of both the trenches. The range of pottery recovered was indicative of domestic settlement only.

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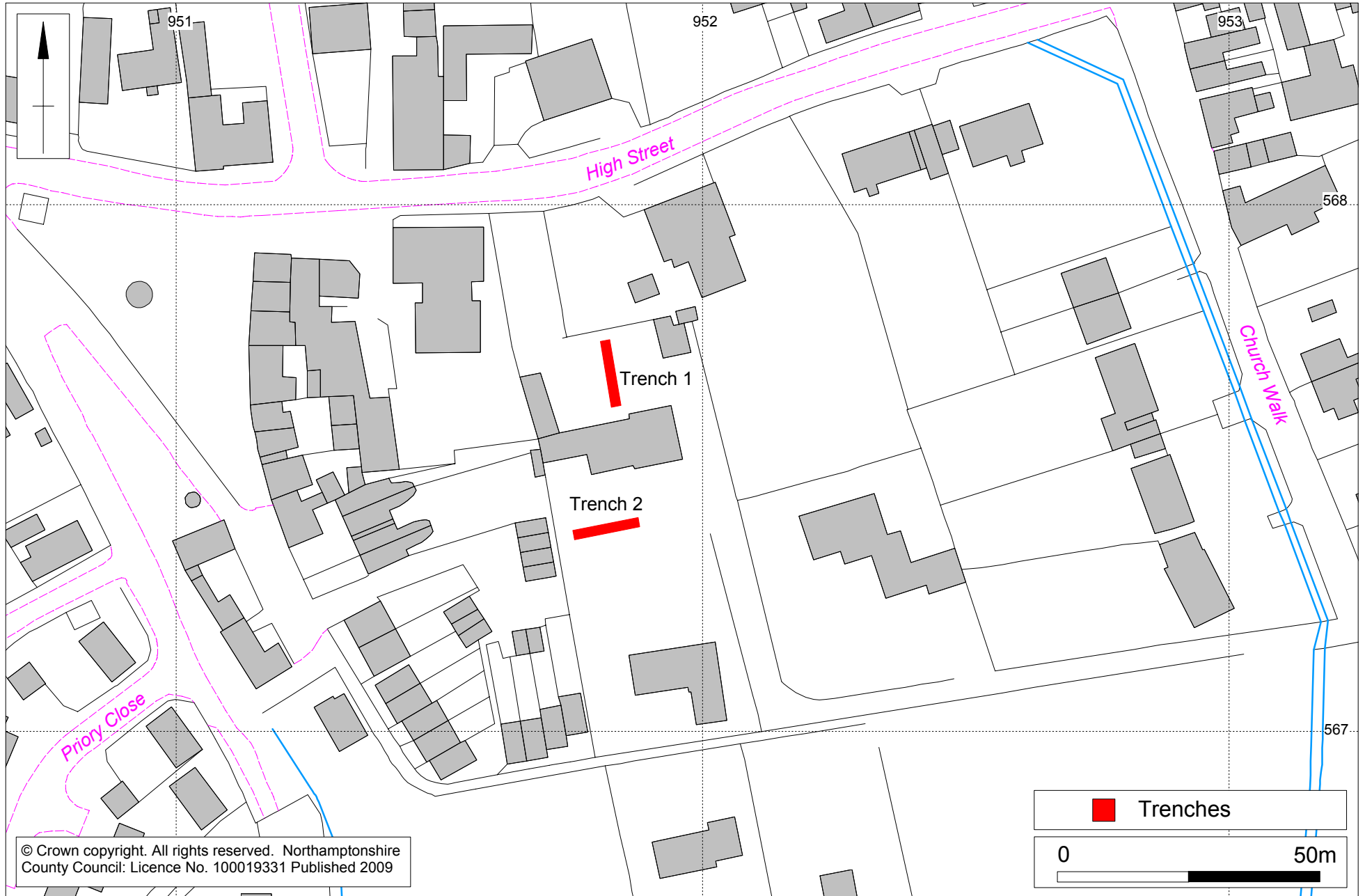
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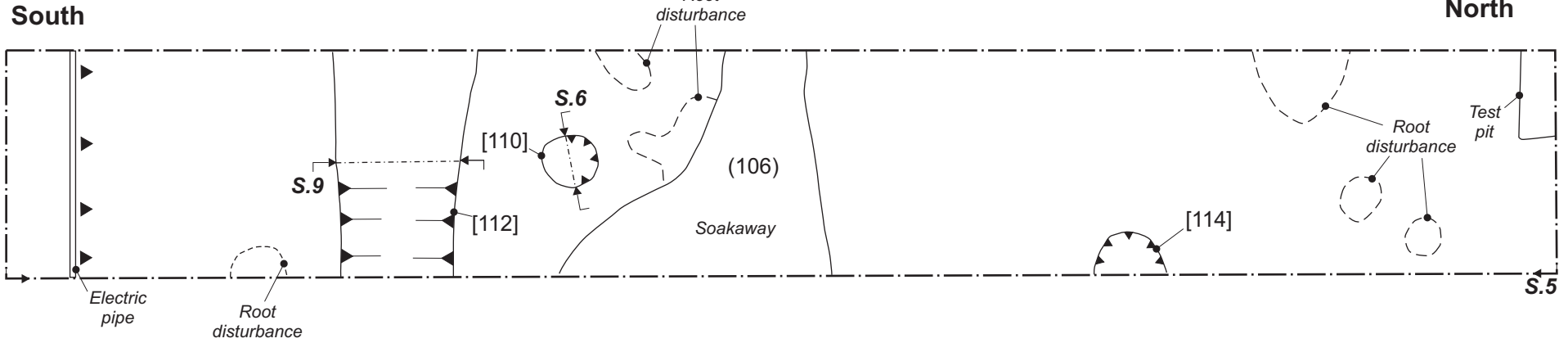


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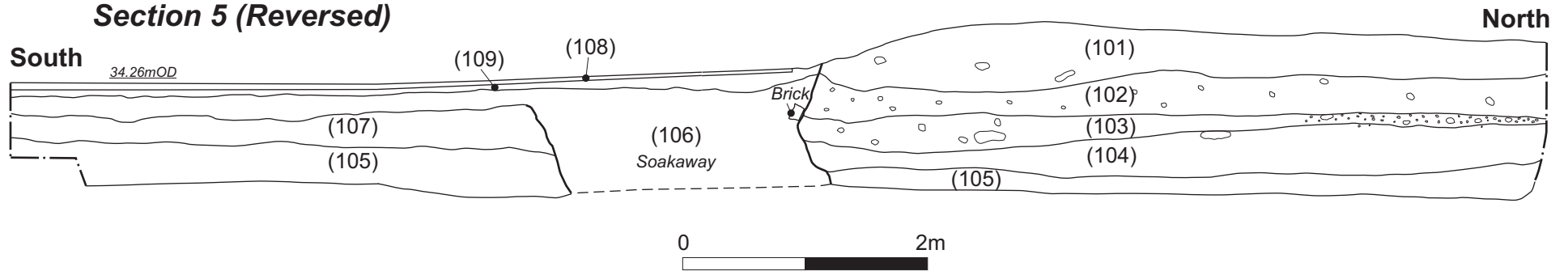
Trench Locations Fig 1



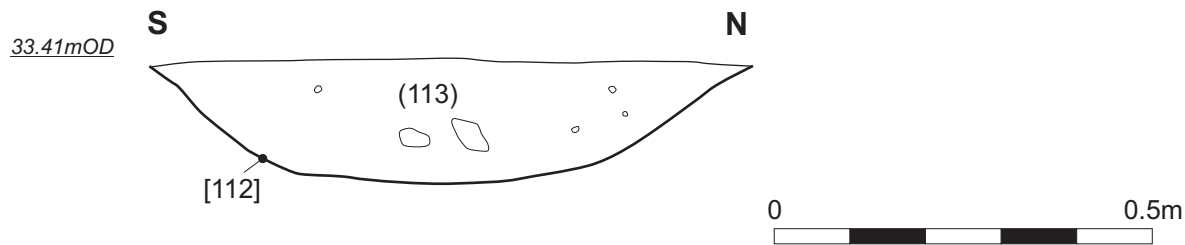
Trench 1, Plan 1



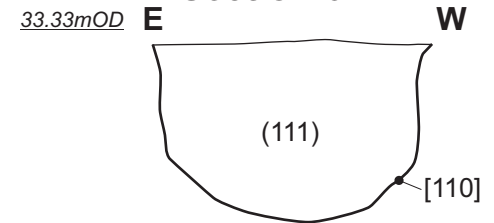
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Section 9

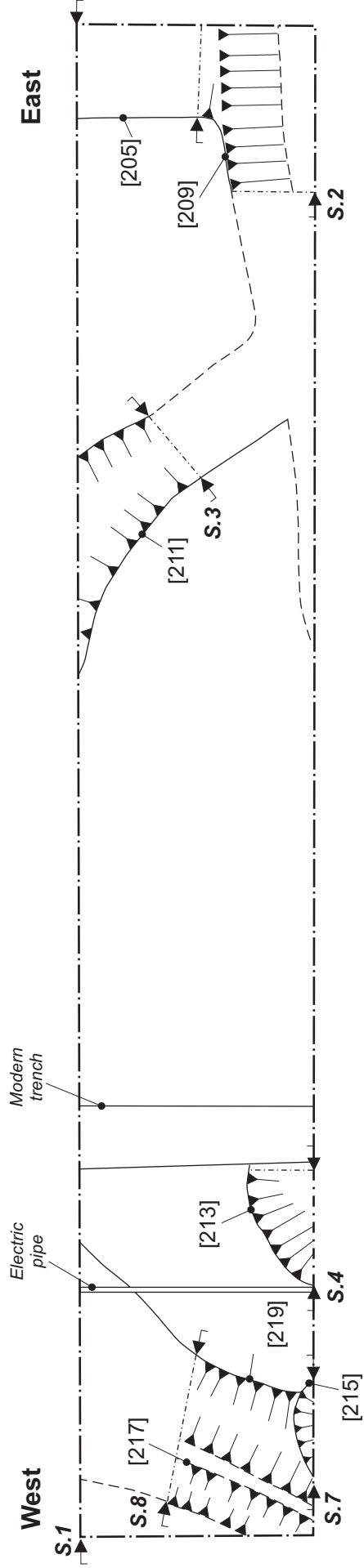


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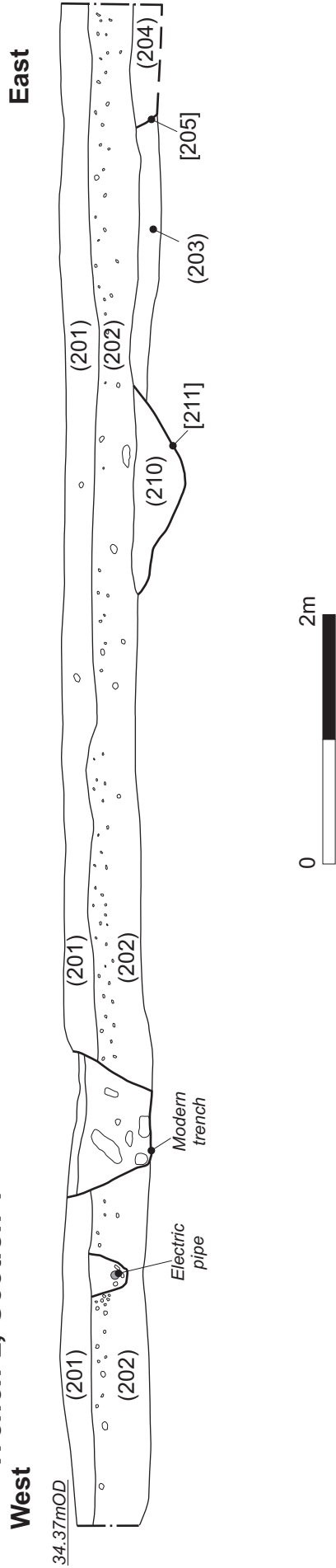


Trench 1 plan and sections Fig 3

Trench 2, Plan 2

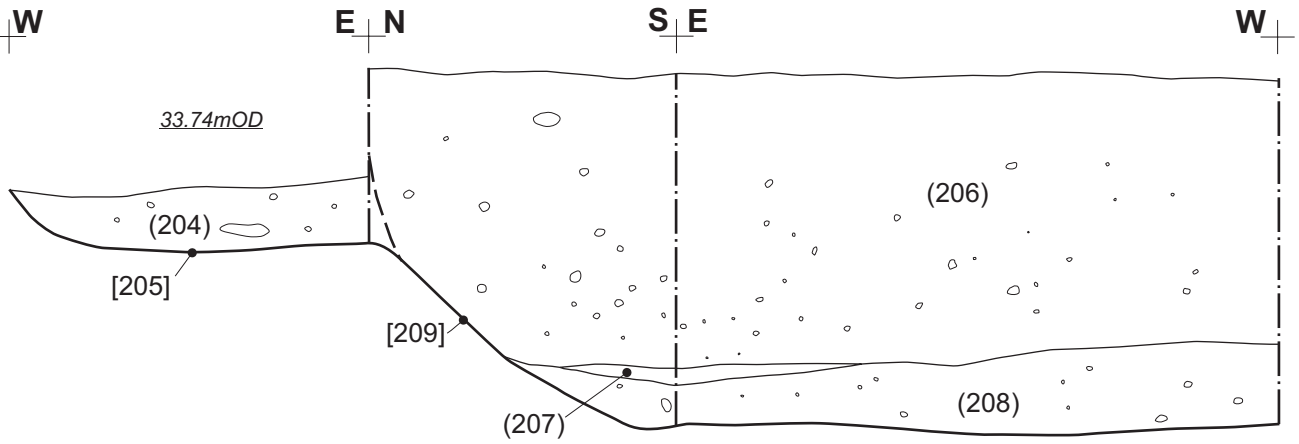


Trench 2, Section 1

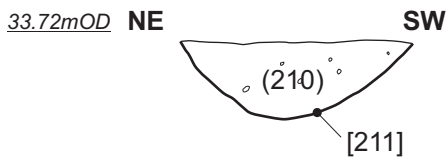


Trench 2 plan and trench section Fig 4

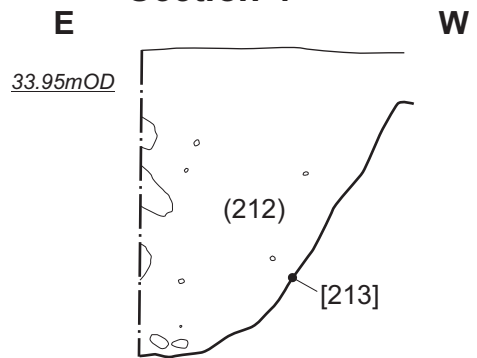
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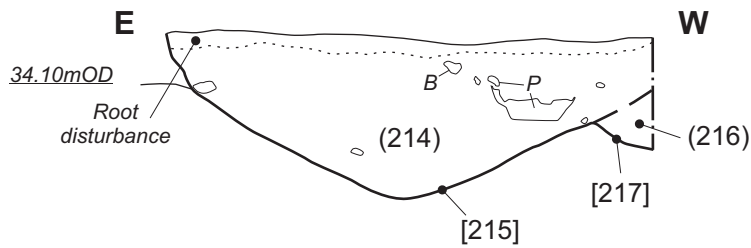
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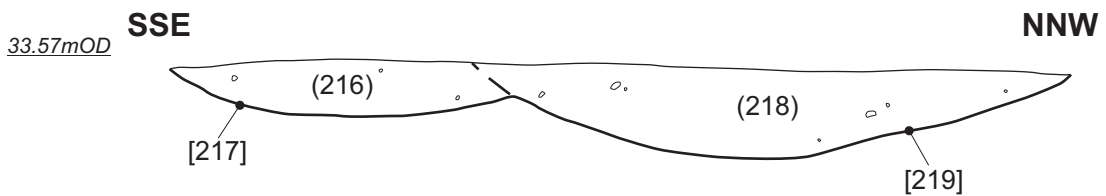
Section 4



Section 7



Section 8



P: Pottery
B: Bone

Trench 2, sections Fig 5



Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology



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