



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

## Archaeological observation and Strip, Map and Sample on land at Stuchbury Manor Farm Greatworth, Northamptonshire



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Northamptonshire  
County Council

Carol Simmonds

Report 11/250

November 2011



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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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Approved by	<i>Andy Chapman</i>		

**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project title	Stuchbury Manor Farm, Greatworth, Northamptonshire	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by the Marston St Lawrence Estate to conduct a archaeological observation and strip, map and sample on land at Stuchbury Manor Farm, Greatworth, Northamptonshire. The mitigation works followed a geophysical survey and trial trenching which identified ditches relating to peripheral landscape management of probable post-medieval date, on what may have been marginal land. The mitigation works identified the extent of one of the ditches and evidence for localised limestone extraction.	
Project type	Archaeological Observation and Strip, Map and Sample	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Geophysical survey (Butler 2011) & Trial Trenching (Simmonds 2011)	
Current land use	Pasture	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	Undated ditches and localised limestone extraction pits (probably post-medieval in date)	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Stuchbury Manor Farm, Greatworth	
Post code		
OS co-ordinates	455679 243636	
Area	1ha	
Height aOD	165m	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Liz Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council Planning (NCCP)	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Carol Simmonds (NA)	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull (NA)	
Sponsor or funding body	Marston St Lawrence Estate	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	7th November 2011	
End date	21st November 2011	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Contents</b>
Physical	NA store MFS11	Client report, site contexts, registers and permatrace drawings, colours slides and black and white prints and negatives
Paper		
Digital		
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)
Title	Archaeological observation and Strip, Map and Sample on land at Stuchbury Manor Farm, Greatworth, Northamptonshire	
Serial title & volume	NA report 11/250	
Author(s)	Carol Simmonds	
Page numbers	18 pages of text and illustrations	
Date	21st November 2011	

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND STRIP MAP AND SAMPLE  
ON LAND AT STUCHBURY MANOR FARM, GREATWORTH  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
NOVEMBER 2011**

*Abstract*

*Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by the Marston St Lawrence Estate to conduct a archaeological observation and strip, map and sample on land at Stuchbury Manor Farm, Greatworth, Northamptonshire. The mitigation works followed a geophysical survey and trial trenching which identified ditches relating to peripheral landscape management of probable post-medieval date, on what may have been marginal land. The mitigation works identified the extent of one of the ditches and evidence for localised limestone extraction.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by the Marston St Lawrence Estate to conduct a archaeological observation (and strip, map and sample) on land proposed for the construction of an anaerobic digestion facility at Stuchbury Manor Farm, Greatworth, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 55679 43636; Fig 1). Previous archaeological work comprising geophysical survey (Butler 2011) and trial trenching (Simmonds 2011) had recorded undated ditches and a modern dew pond and disturbed ground. A brief for archaeological mitigation works was issued by Northamptonshire County Council's Assistant Archaeological Advisor (Mordue 2011) and a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by NA (2011).

**2 BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Topography and geology**

The development site comprises c 1ha of land located on the eastern side of Stuchbury Manor Farm. This is situated approximately 750m north-east of the village of Greatworth, Northamptonshire (Fig 1) to the north of the Welsh Lane B4525. The development area is contained within two pasture or scrub fields immediately east of the farm buildings and slurry pit. The fields are enclosed by fences and thick hedges with cultivated fields to the east and west.

The site has a gentle slope to the west and down towards the Washbrook to the north and lies at c 165m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The superficial geology consists of boulder clay (BGS <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex>).



Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1

## 2.2 Archaeological and historical background

Prior to the evaluation phase a search of Northamptonshire County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) was undertaken (Simmonds 2011). The following is taken from this earlier report. The surrounding area is rich in archaeological sites and finds, although there are no known archaeological sites, Scheduled Monuments or other registered sites within the application zone.

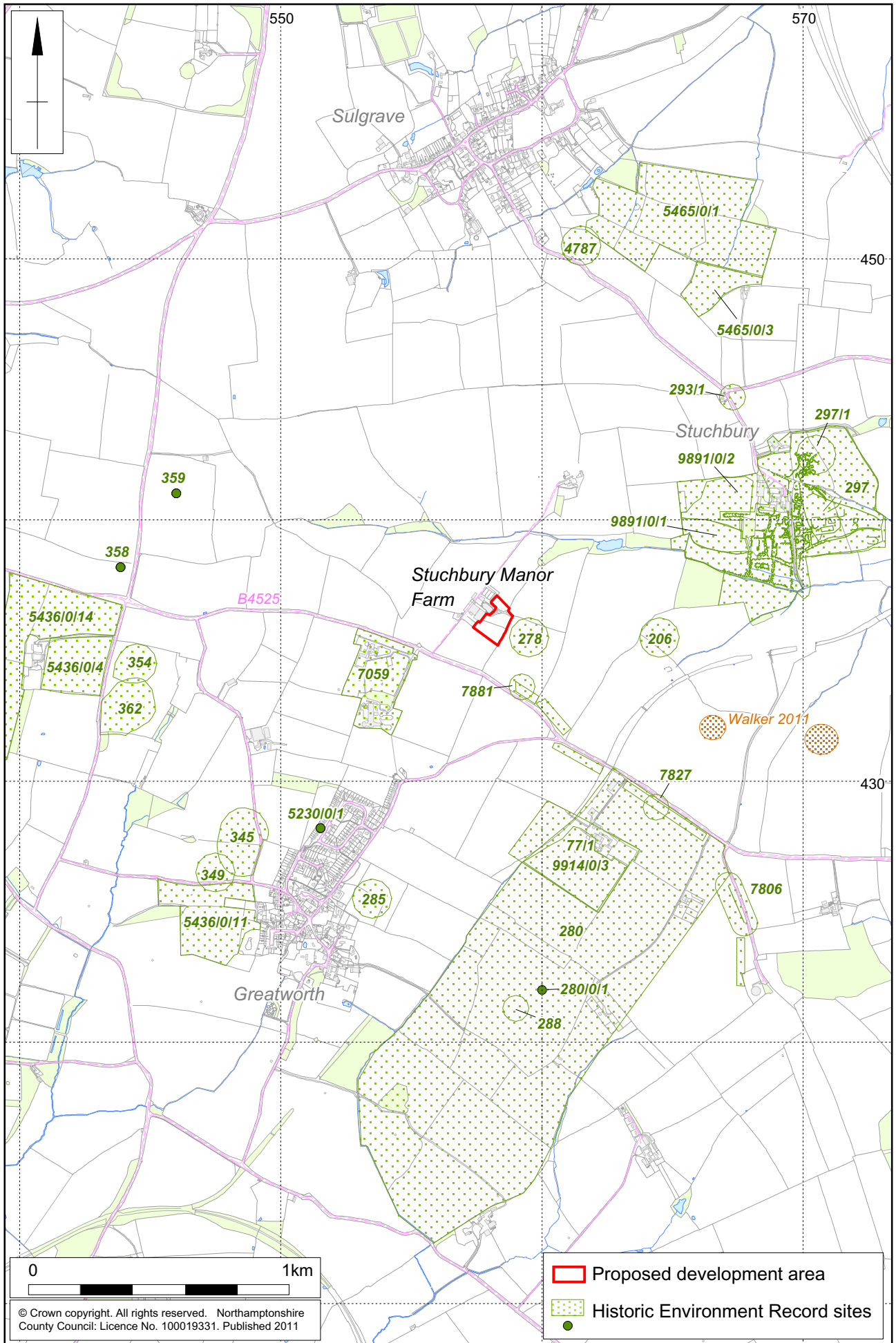
There is evidence for prehistoric activity in the surrounding area with worked flint scatters to the east of the site (**HER278**; Mordue 2011) and to the south and west (**HER288, 349, 354, 358 359**).

Geophysical survey along the route of an Anglian Water pipeline to the south of the site detected a possible curving segmented ditch (Clements 2007; **HER7881**). The site lies within an area of recorded Roman activity. An archaeological evaluation approximately 1km to the east at Spring Farm identified probable enclosures and boundary systems, as well as a series of quarry pits and the remains of a Romano-British building of modest status (Ottaway 2010; Walker 2011). Pottery associated with the building dated exclusively to the 2nd century, while some of the peripheral activity may have dated to the later Roman period (**HER206**). Indications of other sites of Iron Age and Roman occupation to the south-west of have been suggested using fieldwalking data (**HER206, 285, 345 and 362**).

Stuchbury (**HER297**) now comprises the buildings associated with Stuchbury Hall Farm, but in the early medieval period the village encompassed at least 35ha. It is reported as deserted between 1377 and 1547 when it was used for sheep-grazing. Earthworks associated with the village, comprising house sites, hollow-ways and closes, survive and have been mapped by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, England (RCHME 1982, 67). There is also documentary evidence for the site of a church dedicated to St John (**HER297/1**), although the precise location is unknown.

The surviving open fields and areas of ridge and furrow around Stuchbury, Greatworth and Sulgrave have been surveyed as part of the Open Fields Survey of Northamptonshire or identified from aerial photographs (**HER9891/0/1 and 9891/0/2**) around Stuchbury (**9914/0/3, 280/0/1, 5436/0/4, 5436/0/11, 5436/0/14, 5465/0/1 and 5465/0/3**) by Sulgrave. The surrounding area was not just used for farming near Greatworth but also for hunting and there is a documented site of a medieval deer park (**HER280**) near Greatworth Hall (**HER77/1**). A medieval droveway (**HER7806**) was identified during excavations of the water pipeline between Thorpe Mandeville and Greatworth (Brown 2011).

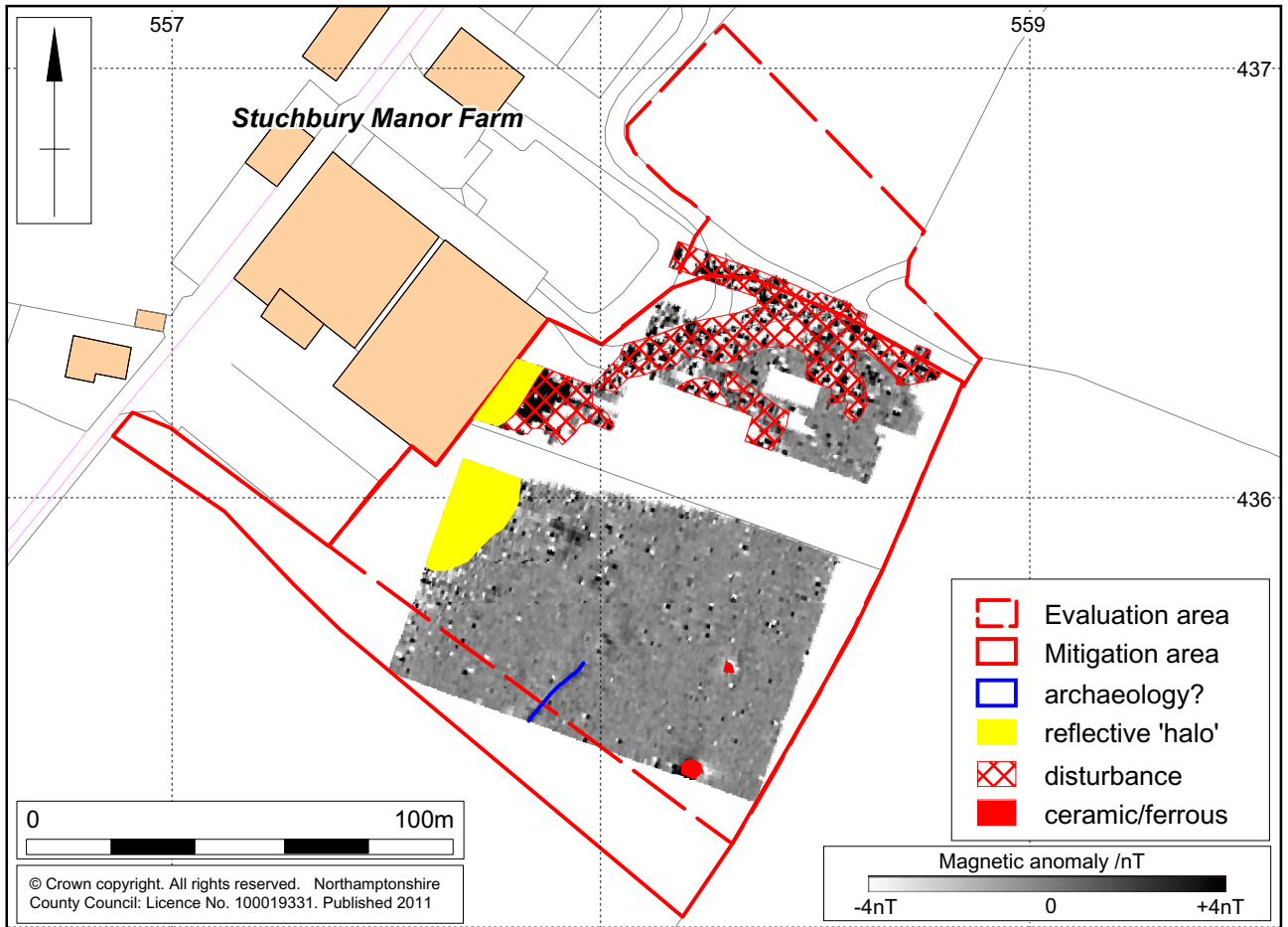
After the Parliamentary Enclosure Acts, the development area comprised a series of rectangular-shaped fields. Military activity is represented by a possible Second World War Prisoner of War camp (**HER4787**) at Sulgrave and a radio transmission station (**HER7059**) to the south of Welsh Lane. The farmyard adjacent to the site does not appear on any historic maps prior to the 1970s. The geophysical survey (Butler 2011) did not identify any definitive archaeological features apart from a magnetic linear anomaly in Field 1, interpreted as a ditch (Fig 3). However, there was some disturbance in the form of 'halos' cast from the farm buildings and mixed responses in Field 2 suggesting made ground or dumping. The trial trenching (Simmonds 2011) confirmed the presence of two ditches in Field 1 and also identified a possible terminal of a ditch in Field 3 (Fig 4). The ditches in Field 1 may be part of the same feature which curved round sharply to the west. Field 2 was heavily disturbed by land drains, an infilled modern dew pond and a dump of asbestos. It was thought that the undated ditches related to outfield enclosures away from occupation.



1:20,000

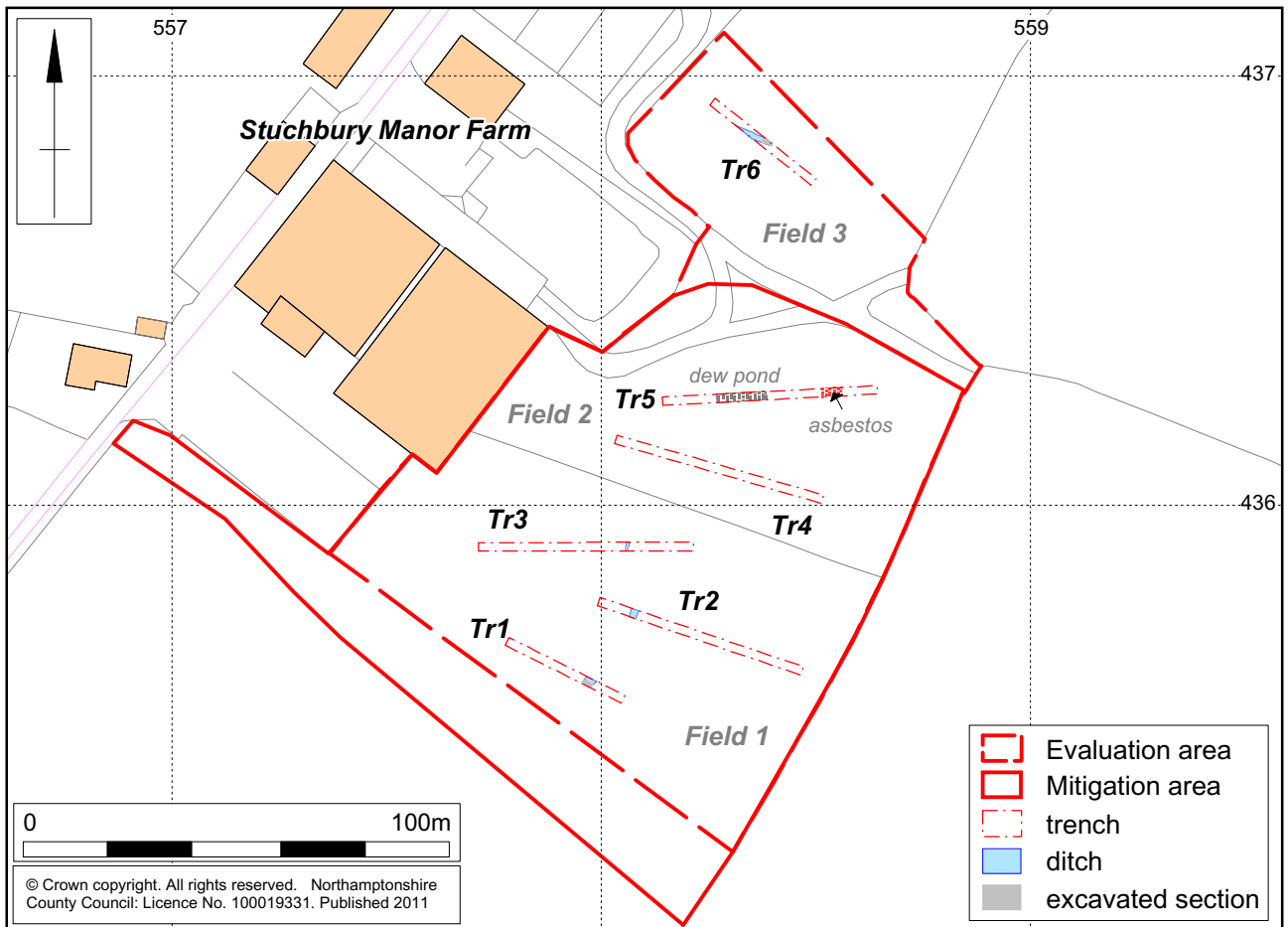
Historic Environment Record sites Fig 2





1:1,750

Detailed Magnetometer Survey Interpretation Fig 3



1:1,750

Trial trenching- archaeological features Fig 4

### 3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the development area the objectives of the archaeological observation and strip, map and sample were to:

- Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits, exposed during the ground works proposed for the construction of the anaerobic digestion facility;
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits;
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists 'Code of Conduct' (IfA 2010) and 'Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief' (IfA 2008) and the 'Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment' (EH 2006).

The area outlined for the digester facility was situated to the east of the farm buildings (Figs 6 & 7). The work comprised an access road strip and an area strip. The initial phase of mitigation works comprised the monitoring of the modern field boundary (ditch and hedge) which was excavated to provide a sound base for the foundations (Figs 5 & 6). This work was observed as it was thought possible that the ditch seen in Field 1 carried on into Field 2.

In the second part of works, the area and road was stripped of topsoil. The final phase comprised the excavation of subsoil in the road strip and the southern part of the area. The development area was bisected by an arbitrary 'cut-line', the south-western part providing the material for the infill to the north-east. The underlying soils in this area to the north-east of the cut-line were preserved *in situ*. The southern part was stripped of subsoil or other overburden to natural soils or archaeological horizons.

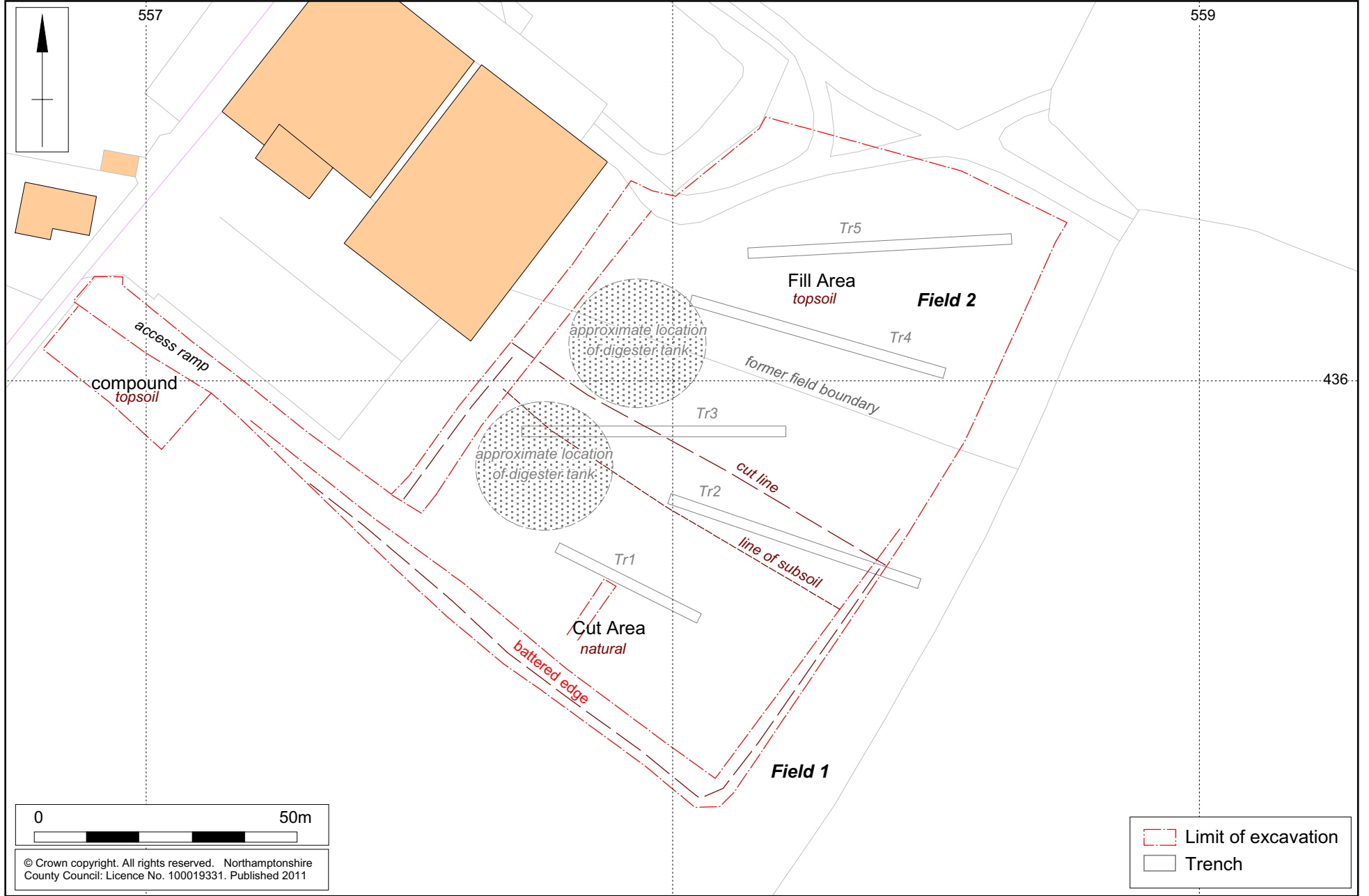
The facility included the erection of two digester tanks, the bases of which would be excavated into soils. The location of the southern tank was monitored during stripping. Following discussions with the Assistant County Archaeological Advisor it was agreed that any monitoring of the strip for the northernmost digester tank was not required.



The dug-out modern field boundary ditch, looking north-west Fig 5

Archaeological deposits will be recorded in numerical sequence and their character and composition will be recorded on Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma record sheets. The record was supplemented by direct annotations of the general site plan as required.



1:1,000



Areas of intervention Fig 6

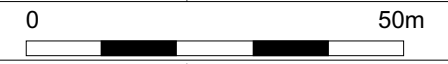
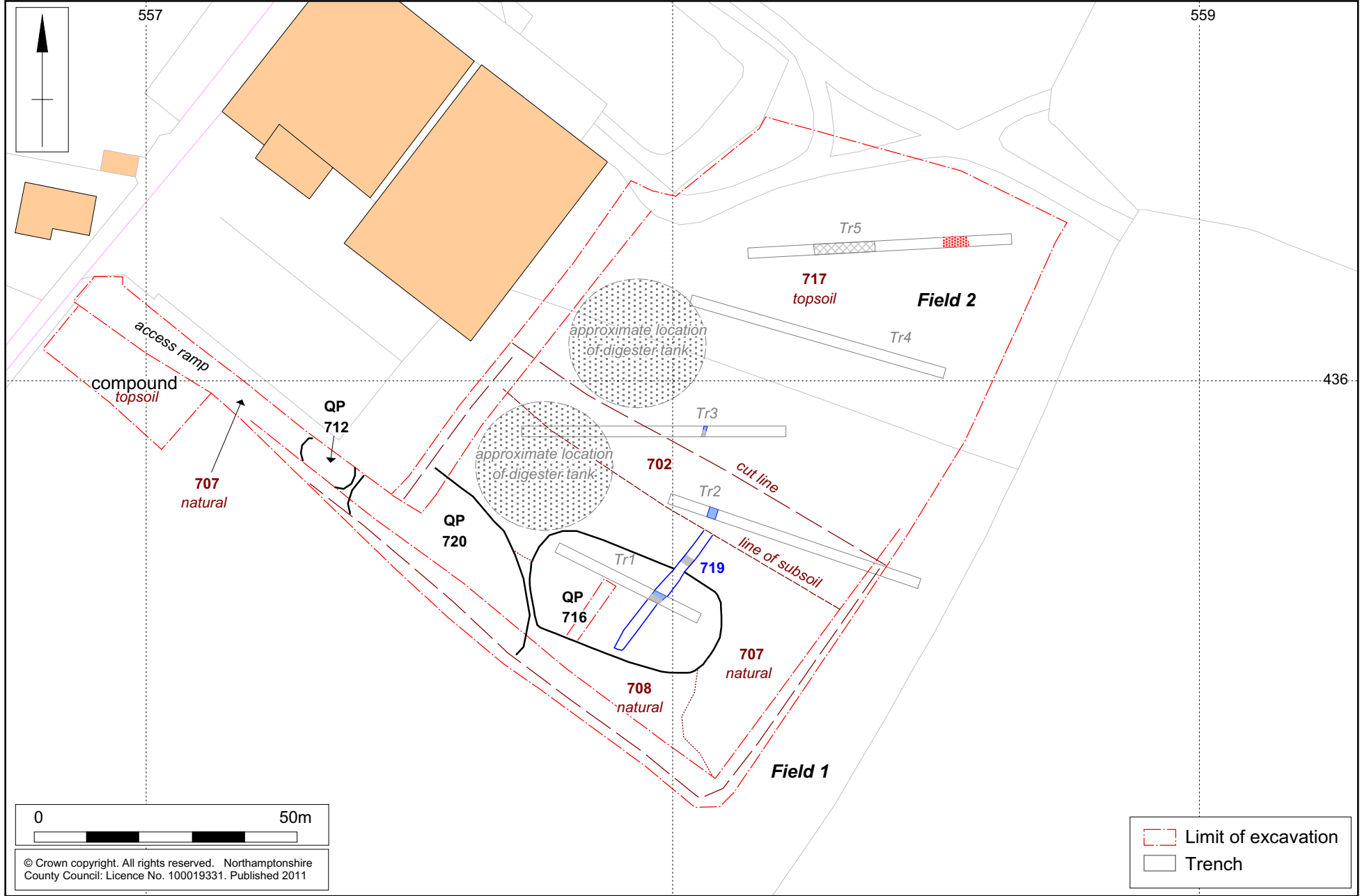


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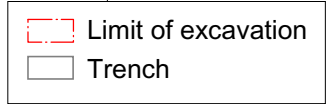
	Limit of excavation
	Trench

1:1,000

Archaeological features Fig 7



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## 4 EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The underlying natural soils principally comprised limestone and red clays (707) or orange sands/ clays (706). The limestone outcropped close to the surface in the southern part of the site, at approximately 162m aOD. Towards the north and east of the site it was overlain by the sands and clays. In general, the natural horizon was overlain by well developed and well weathered subsoil (702) and a topsoil layer, which in the southern area comprised a clean dark brown clay loam (701), compared with a dark brown silty clay with debris and rubbish in Field 2 (717).

There was evidence of localised limestone extraction in the southern part of the site where the limestone was close to the surface (Fig 6). This extraction comprised three sub-ovoid shaped pits ([712], [716] and [720]; section 4.1). A ditch [719] cut across pit [716] (Section 4.2).

### 4.1 Extraction pits

Pit [712], identified during the access road strip, was 16m wide and was at least 0.60m deep with gradual sloping sides (Fig 7). It was filled with alternating bands of compact grey clays or orange clays (711), overlain by a compact grey/whitish-orange sandy clays (710) and sealed with firm light brown clay (709).

Pit [716], located in the eastern part of the area, was 38m long by 20m wide and up to 0.20m deep, with a dish-shaped profile (Fig 8). It was filled with a firm dark greyish-orange silty clay (715), with gravel pockets (714) overlain by a dark brownish-grey silty clay (713).



General view of extraction pit [716], looking south-west Fig 8

Pit [720], 43m long, 18m wide and up to 1m deep, had a dish-shaped profile. It was filled with a compact grey clay with occasional flint nodules and chalk flecking (708).

## 4.2 Ditch

Ditch [719], which was aligned north-east and terminated to the south-west, was at least 35m long, 1.10m wide by 0.08m deep with a dish-shaped profile (Figs 7 & 9). It was recorded during the trial trenching in Trenches 1 and 2 (Simmonds 2011) where it was up to 2.30m wide and 0.60m deep. The ditch cut the extraction pit (713)/ [716]. It was filled with a firm dark grey slightly silty clay (718) truncated by a stone filled field-drain. No artefacts were recovered from the ditch.



General view of ditch [719] and land drain, looking south-west Fig 9

The northern extent of the ditch was not seen in the edge of the post-medieval /modern boundary ditch or in the strip to the north-east of the 'cut-line', where it would have been preserved beneath the subsoil. Where it was excavated in the trial trenches it had an ephemeral bowl-shaped profile with fills comprising brownish-yellow or reddish- brown clay (Simmonds 2011).

## 5 CONCLUSION

The archaeological observation and strip, map and sample exercise was successful in identifying a ditch recorded during the trial trenching and localised limestone extraction. The ditches recorded during the evaluation and mitigation phases are likely to have been part of a landscape of enclosures on the periphery of occupation or post-medieval field boundaries. None of the features contained dating evidence; therefore firm associations could not be made with either the Roman settlement at Spring Farm (Walker 2011) to the east, or the medieval village of Stuchbury. The limestone extraction pits were located where the limestone outcropped close to the surface allowing for ease of access to the resource. It is likely that due to the poor quality of the limestone that it was used for road construction.

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**APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
701	Topsoil (Field 1)	Firm, dark brown clay loam, few small flint nodules, well weathered	0.30m thick	
702	Subsoil	Compact, brownish-red clay, sterile and well weathered	0.15m thick	
703	Tarmac surface	Black tarmac layer	At least 3m wide and 0.05m thick	
704	Brick hardcore	Red brick hardcore layer beneath 703	0.15m thick	
705	Layer	Hard, greyish-yellow clay	c8m wide	
706	Natural 1	Compact, orange sands and clays, coarse grained gravel patches, flint nodules	At 162m aOD	
707	Natural 2	Whitish-yellow corn brash limestone and red clays. Located at southern end of the site	At 162m aOD	
708	Fill of 720 Extraction pit?	Compact, grey clays, occasional flint nodules and chalk flecks	16m wide and 0.80m thick	
709	Fill of 712 Extraction pit	Firm, light brown clays	3m wide 0.20m thick	
710	Fill of 712 Extraction pit	Compact, mottled grey/whitish-orange sandy clays, manganese flecks	8m wide and 0.30m, thick	
711	Fill of 712 Extraction pit	Alternating bands of compact grey clays with flint nodules, burnt stone, manganese and orange clays	16m wide at least 0.50m thick	
712	Cut of extraction pit Filled with 709 - 711	Sub oval in plan, gradual sloping sides and breaks of slope	16m wide at least 0.60m deep	
713	Fill of 716 Extraction pit	Dark brownish-grey silty clay, charcoal flecks, few small flint nodules, small to medium burnt limestone fragments	38m long 20m wide 0.20m thick	
714	Fill of 716 Extraction pit	Coarse gravel (1mm-15mm) poorly sorted in a orange clay matrix	3m long 0.30m wide	

STUCHBURY MANOR FARM

715	Fill of 716 Extraction pit	Firm, dark greyish-orange silty clay, manganese flecks, few small flint nodules and rare large frost-shattered flint chunks	8m long 5m wide 0.20m thick	
716	Cut of extraction pit Filled with 713-715	Sub-ovoid pit aligned east to west. very gradual breaks of slope and sides with a flattish base	38m long 20m wide 0.20m deep	
717	Topsoil (Field 2)	Firm sticky dark brown silty clay with brick, tarmac, plastic sheeting etc	0.30m thick	
718	Fill of 719 ditch	Firm, dark grey slightly silty clay, rare charcoal flecking	At least 35m long 1.10m wide 0.08m thick	
719	Ditch cut Filled with 718	Shallow linear ditch with a dish shaped profile. Very gradual breaks of slope	At least 35m long 1.10m wide 0.08m deep	
720	Cut of extraction pit? Filled with 708	Oval shaped pit?, flat base, gradual sloping sides	43m long 18m wide 1m deep	



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