



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological trial trench evaluation at the  
proposed graveyard extension, Village Land,  
Chacombe, Northamptonshire, June 2012



## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Northamptonshire  
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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		OASIS No. 129694	
Project name	Archaeological trial trench evaluation at the proposed graveyard extension, Village Land, Chacombe, Northamptonshire, June 2012		
Short description	<p>Archaeological trial excavation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on behalf of Chacombe Parish Church Council, at the Village Land on the site of the graveyard extension to the Church of St Peter and St Paul's.</p> <p>There were no archaeological features or deposits identified. Only one modern pit was present, containing a partly charred sheep carcass, charcoal and plastic sheeting. This was not excavated.</p>		
Project type	Evaluation		
Site status	None		
Previous work	Unknown		
Current Land use	Pasture		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type/ period	None		
Significant finds	None		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Village Land, Chacombe		
Study area	1200m <sup>2</sup>		
OS Easting & Northing	NGR SP 449079 243948		
Height m OD	110-115m OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project brief originator	Ms Liz Mordue, Assistant County Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Director/Supervisor	Adrian M. Chadwick		
Project Manager	Adam Yates		
Sponsor or funding body	Chacombe Parish Church Council		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date	25/06/2012		
End date	25/06/2012		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	Location	Content	
Physical	Northamptonshire Archive	None	
Paper	Northamptonshire Archive	Evaluation trench pro forma sheets, colour slides, black and white contact prints, digital photographs, section drawings	
Digital	Northamptonshire Archive	Report text and figures	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
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Back cover: Trench 2 during machining

# **ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION AT THE PROPOSED GRAVEYARD EXTENSION, VILLAGE LAND, CHACOMBE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, JUNE 2012**

## **ABSTRACT**

*In advance of a proposed extension to the graveyard of the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul's, Chacombe, Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation. Two trial trenches 12m long were machine excavated in June 2012 in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and to characterise any archaeology if present.*

*No archaeological features or deposits were identified in either of the two trenches.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The development area (hereafter referred to as 'the site') was on the north side of the village of Chacombe in Northamptonshire, 24 kilometres to the south-west of Daventry, centred on NGR SP 449079 243948 (Fig 1). It is within a field called Berry Close, bordered to the west by the graveyard and Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul's, to the south by Church Lane, to the east by Silver Street, and to the north by fields.

Chacombe Parish Church Council applied for planning permission to extend the burial ground at the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Chacombe, Northamptonshire. The Assistant Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire Council required that a programme of archaeological investigation should take place. Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) were commissioned to undertake this work, and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared, which laid out the aims and objectives of the investigation and proposed the methodology by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out. The WSI was accepted by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor, and the evaluation fieldwork took place on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

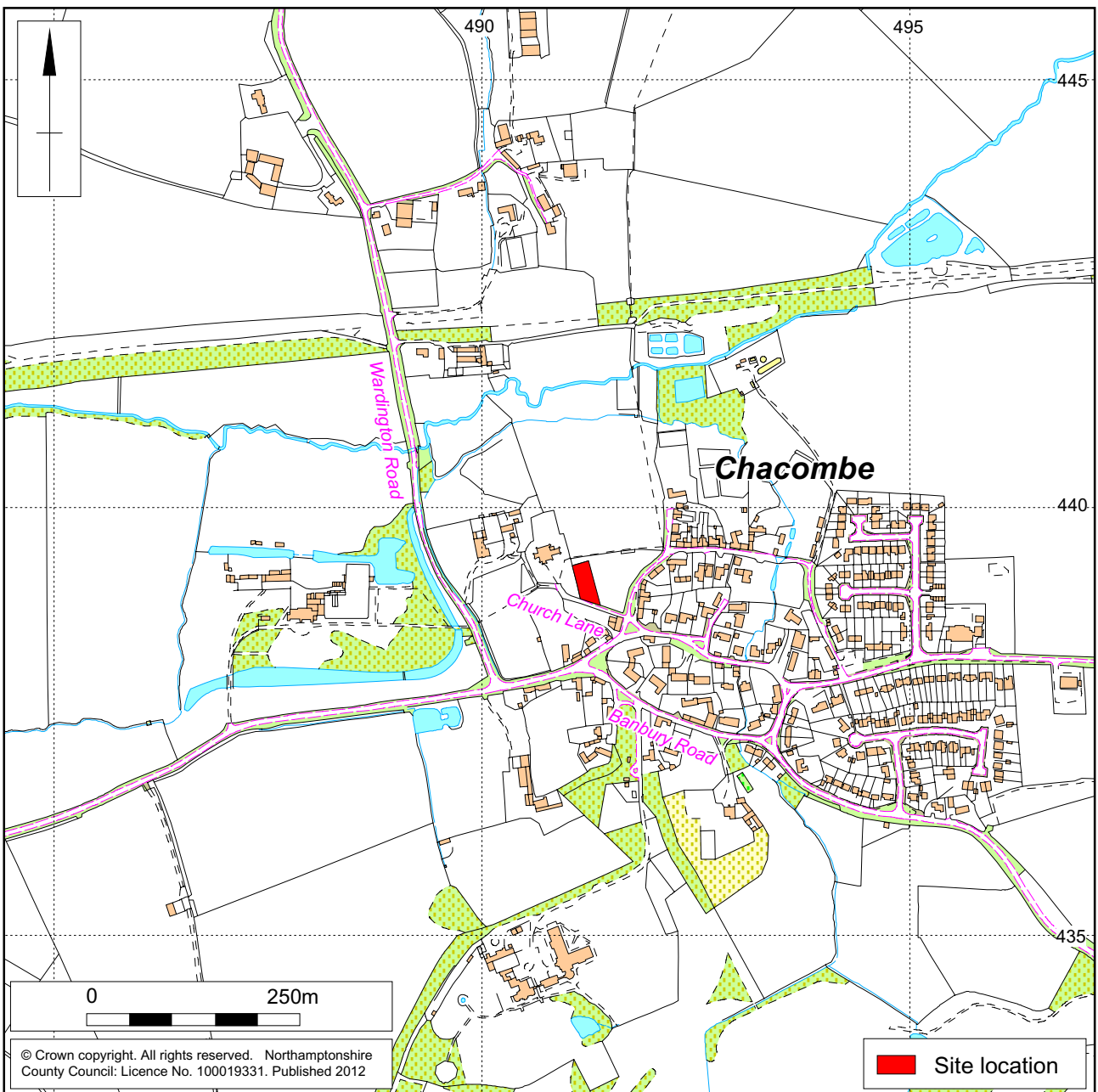
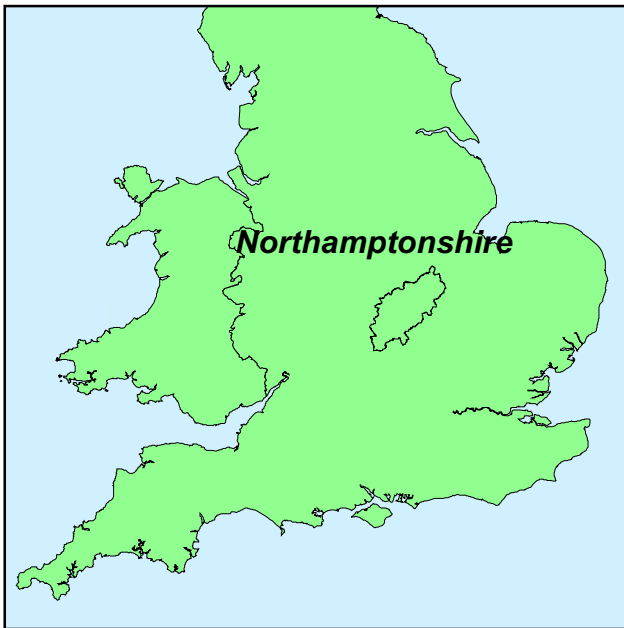
## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Geology and topography**

The site consisted of approximately 1200 metres squared of land forming part of the Village Land, an open area to the east and south-east of the parish church. It currently consists of grassed pasture sloping gently northwards, to a height of approximately 120 metres above Ordnance Datum (OD). Until several years ago there was a smallholding at the southern limit of the site, with rough pasture and several small buildings that have since been demolished.

There are significant earthworks in the field immediately to the north of the proposed graveyard extension, with associated banks and hollows.

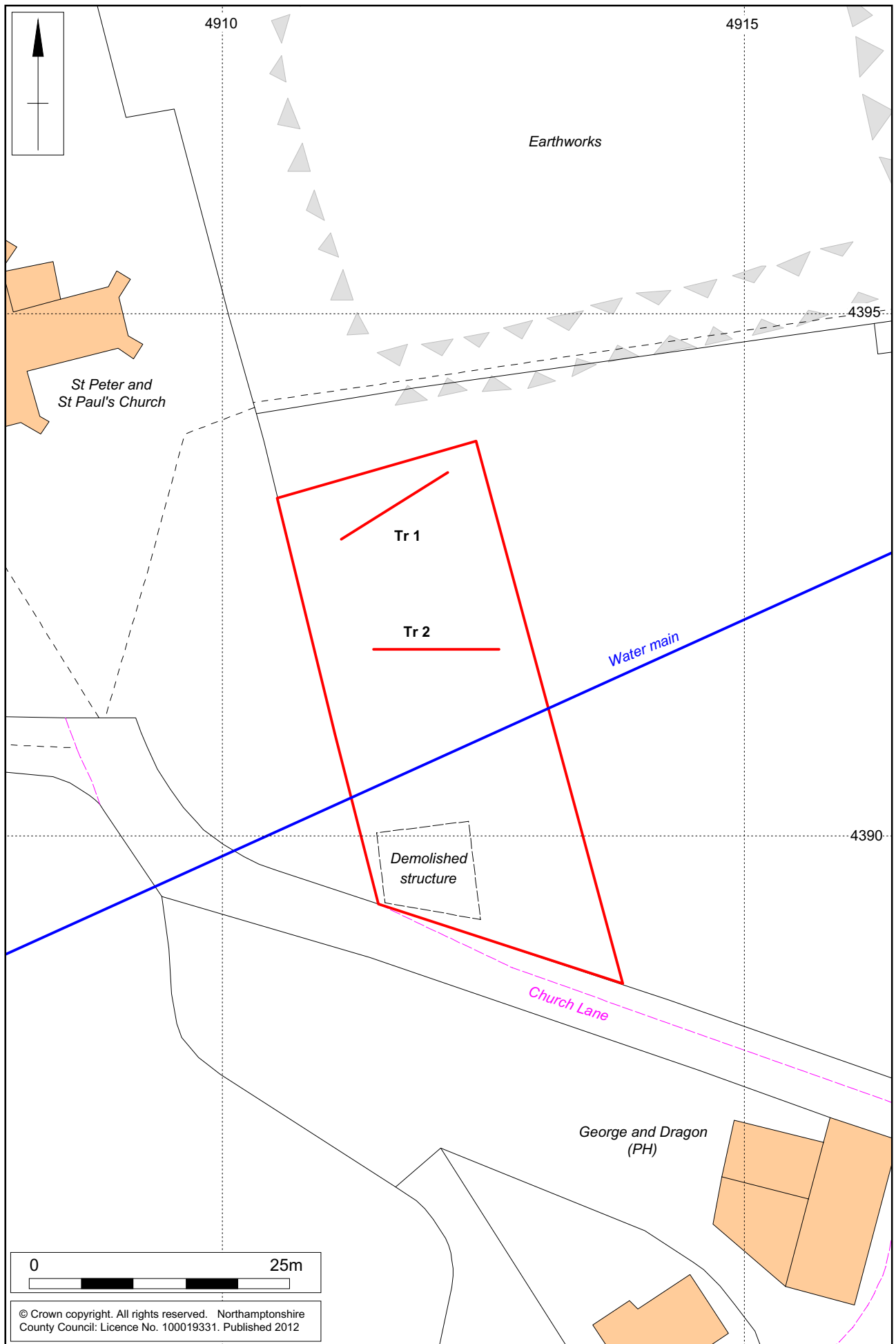
The underlying geology comprises Lias Group Mudstone, Siltstone, Limestone and Sandstone (British Geological Survey of Great Britain <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geindex>).



Scale 1:7500

Site location Fig 1





Scale 1:500 (A4)

The excavated trenches Fig 2

## **2.2 Archaeological background**

The site lies within an area of archaeological interest. The village of Chacombe, often known in the past as Chalcombe, was recorded as *Cewecumbe* in the Domesday Book of AD 1086, whilst approximately 200m to the west of the Site there was the site of Chalcombe Augustinian priory, founded in the reign of Henry II (1154-1189) by Hugh de Chacombe. There is evidence that the priory was encircled by a substantial water filled moat or fishponds. The priory was dissolved in 1536 during the dissolution of the monasteries following the Act of Supremacy in 1534, and little remains of the priory apart from a small medieval chapel. The messuages and lands belonging to the priory were granted to Thomas Page, Treasurer of the Court of Augmentations in 1537, and then to Michael Fox in 1542 (Serjeantson and Adkins 1906).

The Church of St Peter and St Paul is a Grade I Listed Building (Northamptonshire SMR 27/2, MNN 15661, National Monument Record 337214), the earliest parts of which date from the 14th century with later additions.

No previous archaeological work is recorded as having been carried out within the actual area of the site. Within Berry Close field and immediately to the north of the site, however, are a series of earthworks that have been subject to measured archaeological survey. These earthworks are thought to represent the former location of the medieval manor house, situated within a bank and ditch enclosure. There are also the visible outlines of other banks and terraces, along with later small-scale quarry or borrow pits (RCHME 1982, 26; Northamptonshire SMR 27/3, 27/3/1, MNN14763, 123191). In addition, the remains of a hollow-way and possible settlement tofts and crofts from the once more extensive medieval village are situated to the north and north-east (SMR 27/0/1, 27/0/26, MNN17831, 1231).

Chacombe and its immediate area has also been the subject of a recent archaeological survey (Bowes 1997).

## **3 AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Aims and objectives**

The principal aim of the archaeological excavation was to identify the location, extent, nature, date and quality of archaeological deposits and features within the Site through preservation by record, as part of the mitigation of the impact of the development upon the archaeological resource, in accordance with Policy HE12 of Planning Policy Guidance 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPG5, DCLG 2010), now superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, DCLG 2012).

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the WSI were to:

- Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits, exposed during the trial trenching evaluation;
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits;
- To provide information as to the archaeological potential within the site, and to provide for further effective archaeological investigation either in advance of, or during early construction phases;
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

The specific objectives of the project were to:

- Assess whether there had been disturbance in the southern part of the site;
- Identify any archaeology associated with the known earthworks north of the site;
- Establish if the graveyard had originally been more extensive in the medieval period, and if any burials extended into the area of the site.

### **3.2 Methodology**

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the Northamptonshire Archaeology WSI (NA 2012), and agreed with the Assistant Archaeological Advisor for Northamptonshire.

The topsoil and subsoil were removed by a JCB Sitemaster mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.80m wide toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil was stored separately from the subsoil and other deposits. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned visually and with a metal detector in order to maximise finds retrieval. The trenches were assigned individual trench sheets and the depth and physical characteristics of the deposits were recorded following standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures (NA 2011). All deposits were given a separate context number. The machined trenches and representative sections through the trench profiles had digital, colour slide and black and white print record photographs taken of them, and scale section drawings were also made of representative trench sections.

The work was carried out according to standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the principles of MAP2 and MoRPHE (English Heritage 1991, 2009).

The southern part of the site could not be investigated due to the presence of a high-pressure sewage main.

## **4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE**

### **4.1 Trench 1**

Trench 1 was 12m long and 1.80m wide, and orientated broadly north-east to south-west (Figs 2-3). The natural subsoil (102) in Trench 1 was at a depth of 0.35-0.50m (Fig 4). It consisted of mottled light yellow-brown and grey-brown clayey loam with moderate quantities of angular sandstone and ironstone fragments up to 0.20m long. In places tabular fragments of sandstone were outcropping through the soft natural subsoil deposits. There was a subsoil (101) 0.20-0.30m thick formed from mottled light to mid-grey brown silty loam with occasional angular sandstone and ironstone fragments up to 0.20m long, and occasional scattered charcoal flecks associated with bioturbation from worm and root action. The topsoil (100) was mid to dark greyish-brown silty loam.

The total depth of Trench 1 to the top of the undisturbed natural subsoil (102) varied between 0.35m to 0.50m, being deepest in the south-west corner where the slope was steeper, and consequently perhaps resulting from greater hill-wash and colluviums formation.

Only one find was identified from the topsoil deposits in Trench 1 – a single sherd of modern (20th century) porcelain, which was not retained.



Trench 1 following machining, looking south-west Fig 3

#### **4.2 Trench 2**

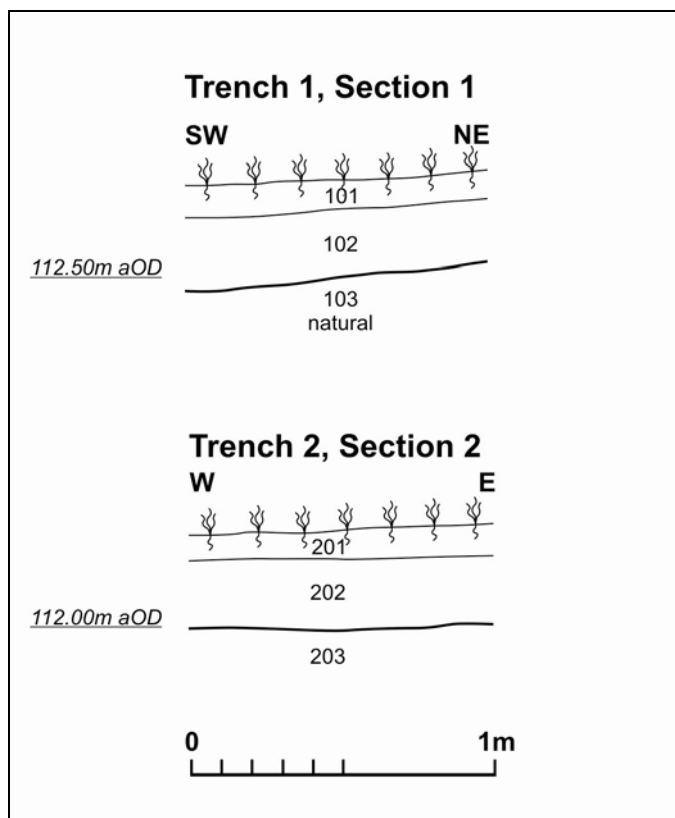
Trench 2 was 12m long and 1.80m wide, and orientated east to west (Figs 2, 4-5). The natural subsoil (202) consisted of mottled light yellow brown and light grey brown clayey loam with moderate numbers of angular sandstone fragments up to 0.20m long. The subsoil (201) was mixed and mottled light to mid-grey brown clayey loam with occasional angular sandstone fragments less than 0.15m long, and occasional charcoal flecks. The topsoil 200 was very dark grey brown to grey black friable silty sandy loam, with frequent charcoal lumps. There was considerable root disturbance throughout the trench.

One feature was observed in Trench 2, cut through subsoil (201). This was a subrounded pit up to 1.2m wide, containing the charred bones of a near complete sheep, along with large quantities of charcoal lumps, iron objects and pieces of plastic sheeting (Fig. 5). This was a modern sheep burial, probably associated with the small holding which used to be present on the Site. It was photographed but not investigated any further.

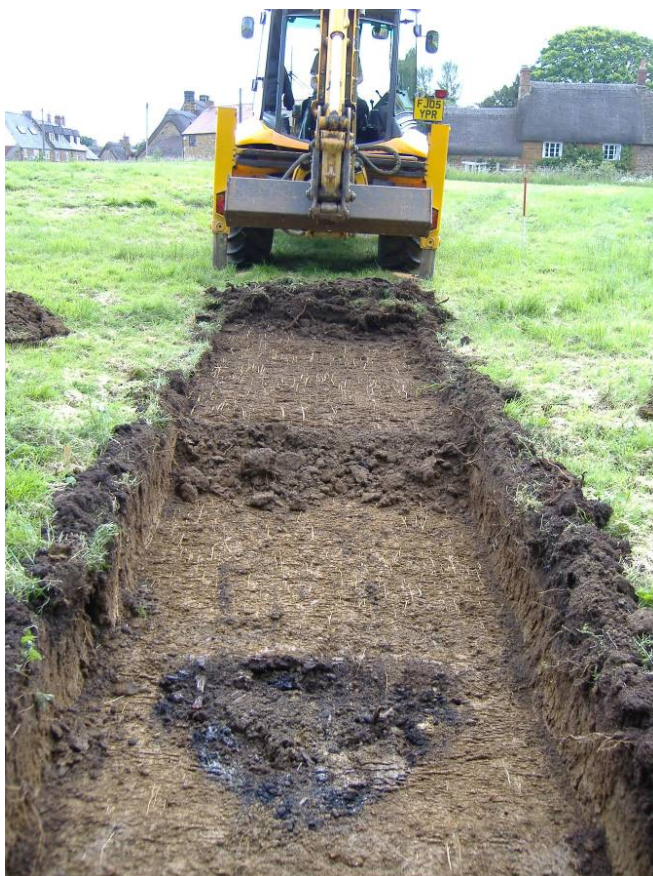
The total depth of Trench 2 to the top of the undisturbed natural subsoil (202) varied between 0.40m to 0.45m.

#### **4.3 Reliability of techniques and results**

The reliability of the results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place in warm, dry and clear conditions, and the light and visibility were good.



Trench 1 and 2 representative sections Fig 4



Trench 2 during machining, showing the modern sheep burial pit in the foreground, and the fall in ground level from the background to the foreground Fig 5

## 5 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features or deposits were present in Trenches 1 and 2.

The surface level at Trench 2 was approximately 1.00-0.50m lower than it was to the north and east, especially to the east where there was a distinct break of slope that did not result from the natural ground contours. This perhaps reflects small-scale terracing or quarrying (I Williams pers comm), although no quarries are marked on any of the 1: 2500 series Ordnance Survey maps between 1885-1973, the 1: 10560 series between 1885-1968, or the 1: 10000 Ordnance Survey maps of 1982-1994. The greater degree of disturbance evident in the topsoil and subsoil deposits of Trench 2 may suggest that it was located within the area of this former quarrying, and that these were re-deposited layers within a shallow quarry scrape.

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## APPENDIX: ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>12m x 1.8m NE-SW</b>		<b>112.82m OD</b>	<b>0.35-0.50m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/ Samples</b>
100	Topsoil	Mid to dark greyish brown silty loam	-	-
101	Subsoil	Mottled light to mid-grey brown silty loam with occasional angular sandstone & ironstone fragments < 0.20m long	0.15-0.20m deep	-
102	Natural subsoil	Mottled light yellow brown and grey brown clayey loam with moderate quantities of angular sandstone & ironstone fragments < 0.20m long	0.35-0.50m deep	-

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>12m x 1.8m E-W</b>		<b>112.30m OD</b>	<b>0-40-0.45m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/ Samples</b>
200	Topsoil	Very dark grey brown to grey black friable silty sandy loam, with frequent lumps & flecks of charcoal	-	-
201	Subsoil	Mixed and mottled light to mid-grey brown clayey loam with occasional angular sandstone fragments < 0.15m long & occasional charcoal flecks.	0.15m deep	-
202	Natural subsoil	Mottled light yellow brown and light grey brown clayey loam with moderate numbers of angular sandstone fragments < 0.20m long.	0.40-0.45m deep	-







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