



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological evaluation on land at College Road
North, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire, Phase 2
Accession number: AYBCM.2011.223



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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No 130600	
Project name	Aston Clinton, College Road North Phase 2		
Short description	In June 2012, Phase 2 of an archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of Prospect Archaeology for Blakelands LLP on land at Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire. The trenching identified remains of medieval ridge and furrow in two trenches. No other archaeological remains were identified.		
Project type	Evaluation		
Site status	None		
Previous work	Heritage assessment (Prospect Archaeology 2010) and Geophysical Survey (Clements and Smith 2011)		
Current Land use	Arable and pasture		
Future work	unknown		
Monument type/ period	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Buckinghamshire		
Site address	College Road, Aston Clinton		
Study area	7.3 ha		
OS Easting & Northing	SP 87619 13206		
Height OD	86m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project brief originator			
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Director/Supervisor	Jim Burke		
Project Manager	Adam Yates NA, Nansi Rosenberg Prospect Archaeology,		
Sponsor or funding body	Prospect Archaeology Blackelands LLP		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	25-06-2012		
End date	29-06-2012		
ARCHIVES	Location	Content	
Physical	-	None	
Paper	AYBCM.2011.223	Evaluation pro forma sheets, colour slides, black and white contact prints, digital photographs.	
Digital	AYBCM.2011.223	Report text and figures	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Title	Archaeological Evaluation on land at College Road, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire, Phase 2.		
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ON LAND AT COLLEGE ROAD,
ASTON CLINTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
OCTOBER 2011

Abstract

In June 2012, Phase 2 of an archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of Prospect Archaeology for Blakelands LLP on land at Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire. The development area, comprising 7.3ha of land to the north of Aston Clinton, has been subject to a desk-based assessment and a geophysical survey.

Remains of medieval ridge and furrow was identified in two of the evaluation trenches. No other archaeological features were identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Prospect Archaeology, on behalf of Blackelands LLP, to undertake phase 2 of an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at College Lane North, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 876132, Fig 1). Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, as the archaeological advisors to Aylesbury Vale District Council, advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains and to inform decisions regarding the potential impact of the proposed development upon the archaeological resource in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5; DCLG 2012).

The programme of archaeological investigation, as outlined in the specification issued by Prospect Archaeology, involved the excavation of 12 trenches across the development area, the results of which are presented in this report.

This tranche of works follows a Heritage Assessment (Prospect Archaeology 2010) and detailed geophysical magnetometer survey (Clements and Smith 2011). Both studies identified areas of potential archaeological anomalies within the development area.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The site comprises c7.3ha of pasture fields on level ground and is located to the north of the village of Aston Clinton, (Fig 1). It is bounded to the south by the Aston Clinton bypass (A41), to the north by an existing recycling centre, to the west by College Road North and to the east by the ARLA Foods development.

2.2 Archaeological background

A Desk-Based Heritage Assessment was undertaken by Prospect Archaeology, in 2010. Substantial settlements of late prehistoric, Roman and medieval date are known in the vicinity although nothing has been identified within the development area. Ridge and furrow visible on aerial photographs confirms that the site lay within the medieval open fields and was mainly under arable cultivation. The site has been largely undeveloped with the exception of small field buildings through the post-medieval

period. The Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal was constructed to the north of the site in the early 19th century. In December 2010 Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook a geophysical survey across the proposed development area (Clements and Smith 2010). The survey identified a small grouping of linear anomalies, which represent field system boundaries, and two isolated anomalies which probably represent small pits. None of these features are securely datable. Ridge-and-furrow cultivation systems, of medieval or later date, were detected in two fields.

Trial trench evaluation on the eastern part of the site designated for the new dairy confirmed the findings of the geophysical survey, identifying a series of ditched enclosures dating to the late Iron Age and Roman periods together with the remains of Iron Age activity and a substantial bank related to the medieval parish boundary (Walker and Maull 2011). Two areas were subsequently designated for mitigation through pre-emptive excavation; Area A (Iron Age activity) and Area B (Iron Age and Roman enclosures, medieval parish boundary). This excavation was undertaken in late 2011 and early 2012 (Fig 2).

Activity in Area A (Fig 2) comprised two adjoining ovoid enclosures and a series of straight, shallow parallel gullies interpreted as cultivation remains. In Area B (Fig 2) the late Iron Age and Roman activity comprised a series of superimposed ditched enclosures with internal partitions, clustered around a large natural pond. Occupation commenced in the later Iron Age and continued until the 3rd/4th centuries AD. Within the enclosures evidence was present for the foundations of timber built structures and stock management features including watering holes. Much of the site was covered by a rural dark earth deposit which contained significant quantities of occupation material. Other material had been washed into or deposited within the pond, whose edges appeared to have been straightened and revetted during the period of occupation. It was notable that the activity in Area B was concentrated on a slightly raised area, defined to the east and west by glacial palaeochannels. This seems to have influenced the location of the medieval parish boundary. Post-excavation analysis of these sites is currently underway.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The aims of the archaeological evaluation are specified in the Project Design (NA 2012).

Trial trench evaluation was designed to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial for important archaeological remains within the application area. Specifically this was through the listed aims and objectives, which were as follows:

- To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present;
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present;

- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

3.2 Methodology

The works were conducted in accordance with the Project Design (NA 2012), *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008) and the *Code of Conduct* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, revised 2010). The work was monitored by the County Archaeological Advisor to Buckinghamshire County Council

Twelve 50m x 2m trenches were excavated within the development area (Fig 3). The trench layout specifically targeted geophysical anomalies and also allowed for a representative coverage of the development area. These trenches are in the same positions as those envisaged for this area during the ARLA Foods development and employ the same numbering scheme. All the trenches were 50m long and 1.8m wide and were machine-excavated using a toothless ditching bucket. The trench layout specifically targeted geophysical anomalies, while also allowing for a representative coverage of the remainder of the application site.

The topsoil, subsoil and non-structural post-medieval and later deposits were removed to reveal archaeological remains or where absent to the natural. The topsoil was stacked separately from the subsoil and other deposits. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification of any features.

All deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were given a separate context number and fully recorded. Recording followed standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures (NA 2011). Deposits were described on pro-forma context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds.

The trenches containing features were planned at a scale of 1:50. Sections of the sequence of deposits in each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and related to Ordnance Datum. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned visually and with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

A full photographic record comprising both 35mm black and white negatives and colour transparencies was maintained, supplemented with digital images. The field data was compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

On completion of the archaeological recording the trenches were backfilled.

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

Twelve trenches were excavated, with the trench numbering follow on from the previous evaluation (Fig 3). The natural horizon was mixed across the development area and consisted of a grey-blue to grey-yellow silty clay with moderate to frequent chalk fleck, natural gravel bands were noted in four trenches (Appendix 1), with an average depth of 0.70m in the south-west, and an average depth of 1.10m in the north-east.

A layer of firm but unstable mottled grey-brown and grey-yellow silty alluvial clay overlay the natural in all of the trenches. This varied in depths across the site from an average depth of 0.50m in the south-west to an average depth of 0.80m in the north-east (Appendix 1); no subsoil was defined in the trenches.

The topsoil at the time of the evaluation was covered in overgrown foliage across two fields south of the site nearest the A41, and had been left rutted after ploughing. The

depth of the topsoil in these fields ranged from 0.15m – 0.40m. Remnants of ridge and furrow, were visible in and around two of the trenches 119 and 120.

In trench 116 (Fig 4), remains of shallow furrows were noted, aligned east to west at a depth of 0.60m, disturbed by land drains and rutting of a modern trackway. The alluvial layer (11602) had modern fragments of brick (not retained) in the central part of the trench, resulting from the rutting of the modern trackway.

Furrows in trench 119 (Fig 5), were noted 1m – 1.3m wide and spaced irregularly at 1.2m and 1.6m aligned north-west to south-east.

Finds recovered from (11901), included 16th to 18th - century and 19th to 20th-century tile, brick and glass. This area of ridge and furrow was identified in aerial photography and geophysical magnetometer survey.

5 THE FINDS by Pat Chapman

5.1 The pottery

There are three small sherds of pottery, weighing 45g, from the topsoil (11901).

A rim sherd, in a fine orange to reddish fabric, comes from a small bowl 180mm in diameter, of early post-medieval date, 16th-18th centuries. The rim is expanded with a groove along the top, and there are shallow horizontal grooves around the body, with patches of green glaze surviving on the inner surface.

The other two tiny fragments, both in a fine bright orange fabric, are too small to determine but could be Roman in date.

5.2 Ceramic building material

This comprises a sherd of ceramic roof tile and a fragment of brick, together weighing 145g, from topsoil (11901). The roof tile is 11mm thick and made of fine sandy orange clay with buff streaks and occasional very small gravel up to 1mm wide. It is a pegtile with a sub-circular peghole c 11mm in diameter. The brick fragment is made from coarse sandy orange-brown clay with frequent inclusions of gravel up to 11mm long. The tile could be late medieval to early 19th century in date, the brick post-medieval.

5.3 Glass

The glass stopper from topsoil (11901), is made of bluish-green glass with a very slightly domed top and gently tapering stop with a flat end, it is datable to the late 19th and 20th centuries

6 DISCUSSION

Although substantial settlements of late prehistoric, Roman and medieval date were excavated in the ARLA development (NA 2011) to the north-east of the development area, nothing has been identified of any archaeological significance within the site. Ridge and furrow which was visible on aerial photographs and identified in the geophysical magnetometer survey confirms that the site lay within the medieval open fields and was mainly under arable cultivation. The site has been largely undeveloped with the exception of small field buildings through to be of post-medieval period. Modern crossing points have been constructed over drainage dykes, and evidence of modern dumping was visible at gateways and around the foliage on the development area. This corresponds with the findings with the previous trial trench evaluation and excavation which indicated that the archaeology did not extend into this part of the site.

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APPENDIX: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
109	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		85.50m aOD	1.27m, 84.23m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
10901	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey clay loam with occasional small stones and chalk fragments	0.15-0.18m thick	
10902	Layer	Mottled light yellow-brown clay	0.80-1.12m thick	
10903	Natural	Mixed, yellow-brown to grey clay with chalk fragments and gravel	–	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
110	42m x 1.8m NE-SW		86.10m aOD	0.95m, 85.15m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
11001	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey loam clay with occasional small stones/chalk flecks	0.22-0.26m thick	
11002	Layer	Mottled grey-yellow clay	0.63-0.73m thick	
11003	Natural	Grey-blue clay with occasional chalk fragments and patches of orange gravel clay	–	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
111	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		86.20m aOD	0.98m, 85.22m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
11101	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey clay loam with small chalk fragments, small stones	0.14-0.21m thick	
11102	Layer	Mottled grey-yellow clay silt with occasional chalk fragments	0.58-0.78m thick	
11103	Natural	Stiff mottled blue-grey clay with patches of orange clay	–	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
112	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		87.30m aOD	0.98m, 86.32m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
11201	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey loamy clay with small chalk fragments, small stones	0.18-0.26m thick	
11202	Subsoil	Mid grey clay with rare chalk flecks	0.31-0.45m thick	
11203	Natural	Mixed orange and grey clays with chalk flecks	0.19-0.35	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
113	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		88.60m aOD	1.12m, 87.48m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
11301	Topsoil	Dark brown loamy clay with rare small stones, flint and chalk flecks	0.23-0.29m thick	
11302	Layer	Stiff mottled yellow-grey clay with rare chalk flecks	0.19-0.56m thick	
11303	Layer	Mottled yellow-grey and yellow-blue clay	0.30-0.70 thick	
11304	Natural	Mottled grey-blue clay with frequent chalk inclusions	–	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
114	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		87.60m aOD	0.95m, 86.65m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
11401	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey loamy clay, rare stones and chalk flecks	0.16-0.22m thick	
11402	Subsoil	Mid grey silty clay	0.47-0.75m thick	
11403	Natural	Mid grey-yellow clay with occasional chalk flecks	–	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
115	50 x 1.8m NW-SE		87.20m aOD	0.71m, 86.49m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
11501	Topsoil	Dark brown loamy clay with rare flint and sub-angular stones	0.18-0.30m thick	
11502	Layer	Mid yellow-grey silty clay	0.28-0.44m thick	
11503	Natural	Mid grey clay with chalk flecks	–	

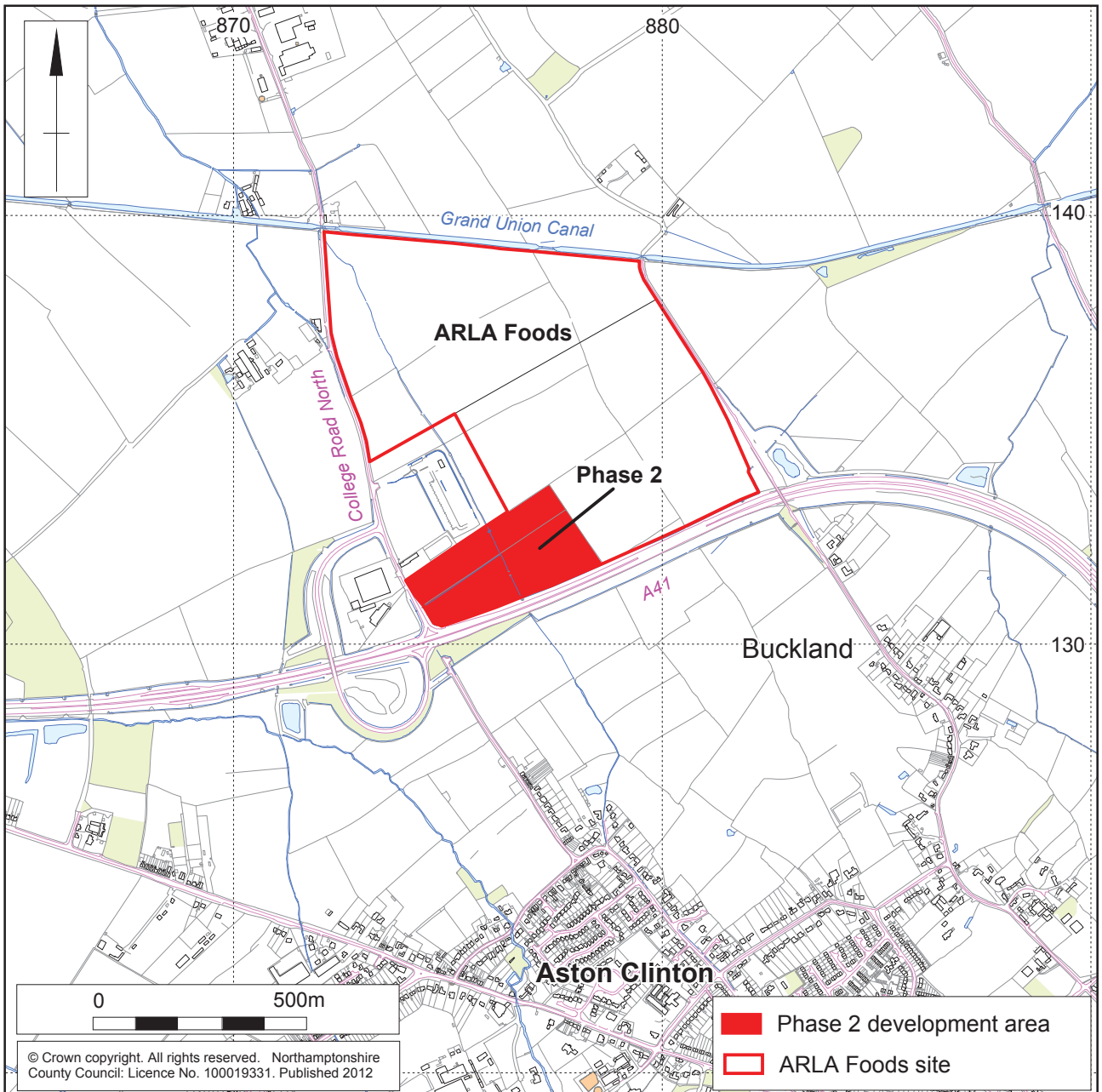
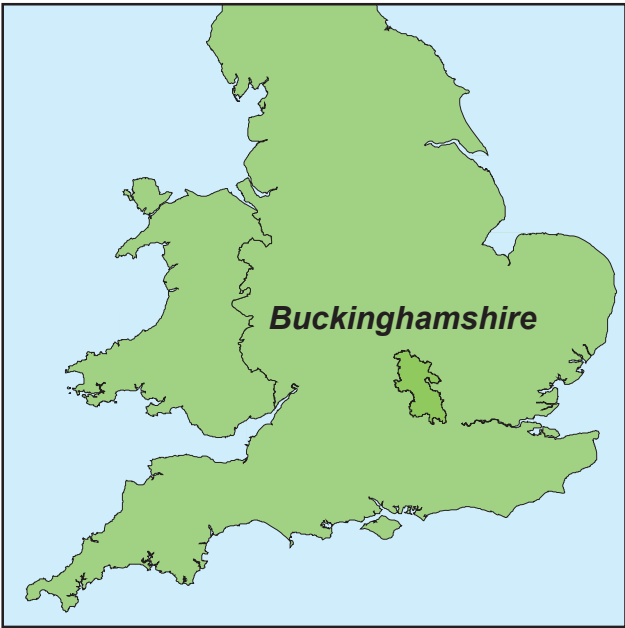
Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
116	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		87.00m aOD	0.60m, 86.40m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
11601	Topsoil	Dark brown loamy clay with rare flint	0.22-0.34m thick	
11602	Layer	Mid yellow-grey silty clay with occasional mixed stone	0.24-0.38m thick	Modern brick not retained
11603	Natural	Light grey clay with mottled yellow-orange gravel patches with chalk flecks	–	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
117	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		87.00m aOD	0.85m, 86.15m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
11701	Topsoil	Dark brown loamy clay, moderate small stones and chalk fragments	0.22-0.30m thick	
11702	Layer	Mottled yellow-grey clay with small rounded stone and chalk flecks	0.20-0.50m thick	
11703	Natural	Mottled yellow-grey clay with orange-brown gravel patches	–	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
118	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		87.40m aOD	0.70m, 87.70m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
11801	Topsoil	Dark brown loam clay with mixed stone and chalk flecks	0.15-0.45m thick	
11802	Layer	Mid yellow-grey silty clay rare sub-rounded gravel	0.12-0.50m thick	
11803	Layer	Mid grey silty clay	0.20m thick	
11804	Natural	Light grey clay and light brown clay pockets	–	

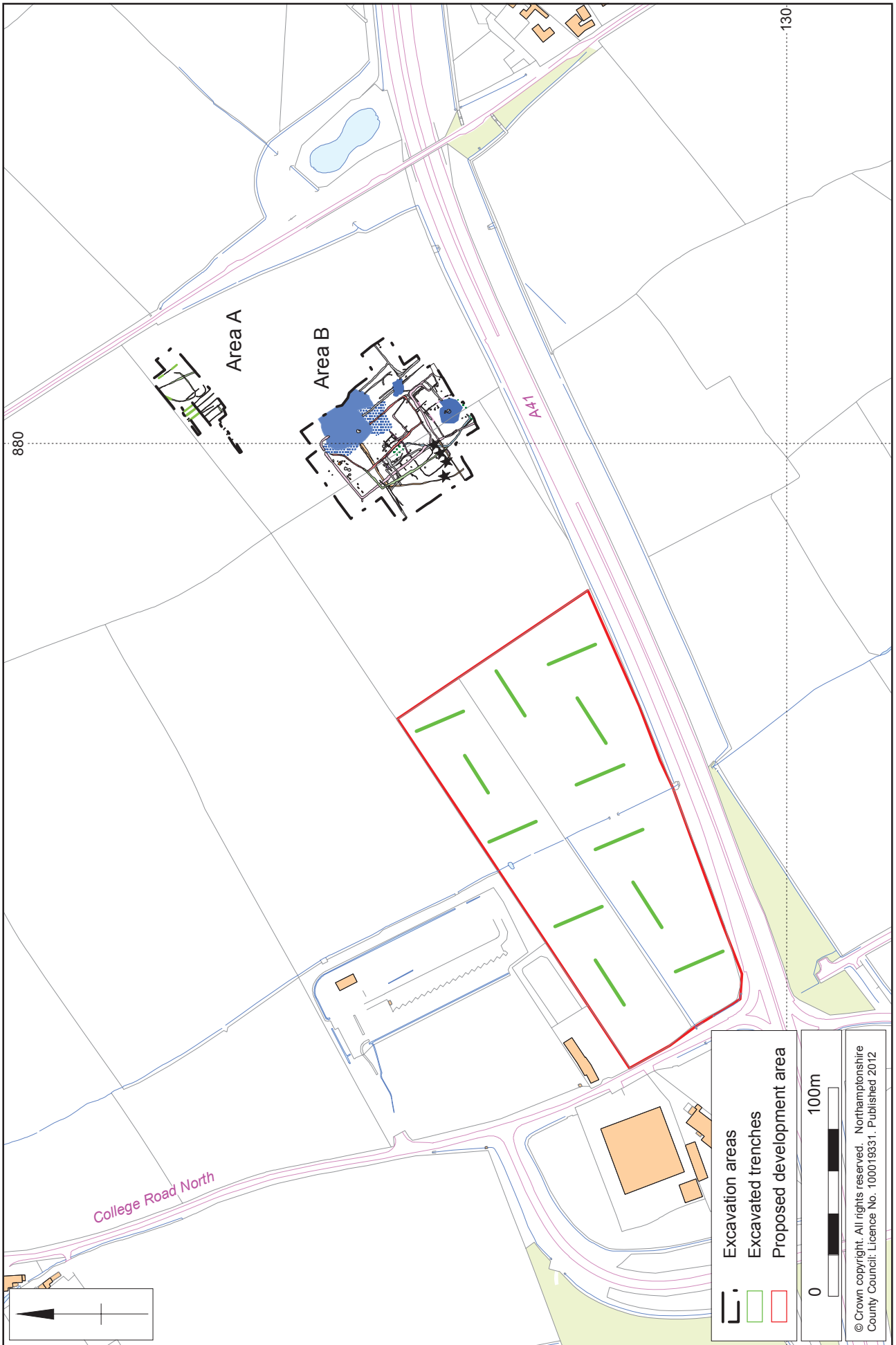
Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
119	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		86.60m aOD	0.63m, 85.97m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
11901	Topsoil	Dark grey brown loamy clay with occasional stone and remains of ridge and furrow	0.18-0.25m thick	Post-medieval tile, brick, pottery, glass
11902	Layer	Mid brown-yellow silty clay	0.24-0.45 thick	
11903	Natural	Light grey-blue silty clay with chalk flecks		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
120	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		86.30m aOD	0.75m, 85.55m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
12001	Topsoil	Dark brown loamy clay, rare stones	0.13-0.23m thick	
12002	Subsoil	Mid brown-yellow silty clay	0.48-0.62m thick	
12003	Natural	Mid grey-blue clay with chalk flecks	–	



Scale 1:15,000

Site Location Fig 1



Scale 1:5000

Phase 2 and Previous Mitigation Areas

Fig 2



Scale 1:2,500

Trench locations Fig 3

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General view of trench 116, looking north-west

Fig 4



General view of trench 119, looking south-west

Fig 5



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