Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land East of Doddington Road, Wellingborough Northamptonshire November 2012

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QUALITY CONTOL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	**Oasis Number: 138651**	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land east of Doddington Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, November 2012	
Short description	In November 2012, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on land to the east of Doddington Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. The works confirmed the presence of a sub-square enclosure and possible associated ditch. No dating evidence was recovered from the ditches but the form of the enclosure suggests a prehistoric origin. The site was traversed by remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.	
Project type	Trial trench evaluation	
Previous work	Geophysical survey	
Current land use	Arable	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	Unknown	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Doddington Road, Wellingborough	
Easting Northing	SP 88110 65810	
Area (sq m/ha)	5.736 ha	
Height aOD	69.00mAOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Assistant Archaeological Advisor	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Director/Supervisor	Jason Clarke (NA)	
Project Manager	Mark Holmes (NA)	
Sponsor or funding body	Mercia Crematoria Developments Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	21/11//2012	
End date	26/11/2012	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Contents**
Physical	NA Offices	Site records (1 archive box)
Paper		
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land east of Dodddington Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, November 2012	
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Abstract

In November 2012, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, on land to the east of Doddington Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. The works confirmed the presence of a sub-square enclosure and possible associated ditch. No dating evidence was recovered from the ditches but the form of the enclosure suggests a prehistoric origin. The site was traversed by remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.

1 INTRODUCTION

In November 2012, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) on land to the east of Doddington Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 88110 65810; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Mercia Crematoria Developments Ltd for the proposed development of the land.

The scope of works was outlined and detailed in the Brief issued by NCC (Mordue 2012a&b) and in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2012). The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the presence of any archaeological features or deposits within the application area and to date and characterise their extent, depth of burial and state of preservation.

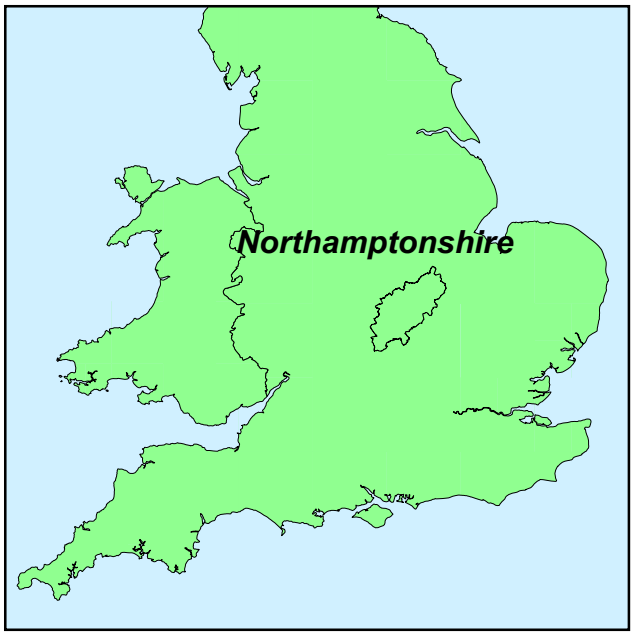
2 BACKGROUND

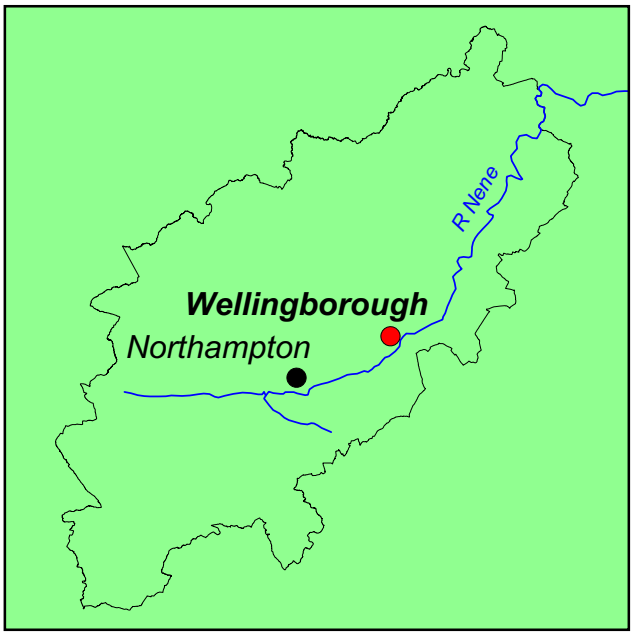
2.1 Location and geology

The proposed development area comprises a single large field of former arable farmland situated to the south of the A45 dual carriageway. It is bordered by the Doddington Road at the north-west and HM Prison Wellingborough at the north-east (Fig 1).

The site is located on the northern slope of the Nene Valley. At the top of the slope, in the north-west, the ground height is approximately 85m aOD whilst at its lowest point in the south-east of the survey area the height is around 58m aOD. Towards the south of the survey area there is a dry slade which runs from west to east down towards the River Nene which lies *c* 500m to the east.

As the ground falls away to the south-east, a series of geological bedrock strata are present across the site (BGS 2012). The lower, southern half of the site is Whitby Mudstone formation, whilst in the northern half Northampton Sand (ironstone); Stamford Member (sandstone and siltstone) and Rutland Formation (mudstone) are progressively exposed.





Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A cropmark complex, possibly a prehistoric settlement, is recorded in the county Historic Environment Record (HER) as being located *c* 300m south-west of the application area (HER 3837). Immediately at the north of this and situated *c* 160m to the west of the application area, but within retained land, previous archaeological observation and recording identified a limestone wall, ditches and pottery indicating the site of a Romano-British settlement (HER 3836).

Approximately 250m to the south-east of the application area, early-middle Saxon pottery has been recovered during fieldwalking (HER 3835). This latter scatter of pottery may represent the location of a settlement of this date.

A geophysical survey was carried out over the application site in October 2012, and also covering an area of retained land to the west of the application site (Holmes 2012).

Towards the eastern edge of the application area, the survey identified curvilinear ditches forming an enclosure, likely to be prehistoric. The enclosure appears to have an entrance at its south west corner, and a number of possible pits were also recorded outside the entrance.

A Second World War searchlight battery was previously located immediately north-west of the site (HER 9043). No finds or archaeological monuments are recorded from the application area itself.

In the wider environs, approximately 1km to the west, excavations in 1979 on the A45 new road examined a defended enclosure dating to the late Iron Age (Windell 1981) and in 1997-98 there was open area excavation of an adjacent area of extensive middle and late Iron Age settlement (Thomas and Enright 2003).

3 METHODOLOGY

Twelve trial trenches were excavated in accordance with a trench plan prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) and approved by Liz Mordue (Assistant Archaeological Adviser, Northamptonshire County Council) (Fig 2).

Five of the trenches measured 50m long, three were 30m long and four were 20m long. The total length excavated was 420m. Trenches were positioned using a Leica system 1200 GPS.

A 360^{o} tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.80m wide ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features. A hand-drawn plan of all archaeological features was made at scale 1:50 or 1:100 and was related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Archaeological deposits were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature. Recording followed standard NA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2011). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. Context sheets were cross-referenced to scale plans, section drawings and photographs. Photography was with 35mm black and white film and colour slides, supplemented with digital images. Sections were drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate and related to Ordnance Survey datum. Spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to maximise the recovery of metal objects.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 General stratigraphy

The underlying geology of ironstone and clay, was encountered between 0.20-0.50m below the modern ground surface. This occurred as light-mid blue-brown clay with occasional angular to sub-angular pebbles and fragmented ironstone with sand clay infilling. The subsoil was light grey-brown sandy clay and the topsoil was mid greyish-brown sandy clay, both soils contained occasional ironstone fragments.

Archaeological features cut into the natural geology were found in Trench 5. Remnant furrows from ridge and furrow cultivation were encountered in Trenches 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Trench 6, which was positioned through the possible southern entrance to the enclosure, did not reveal any archaeological features. Other less magnetically strong anomalies tested in Trenches 2, 3 and 4 also did not equate with any below ground features.

4.2 The trial trenches (Figs 2 -3)

The trench locations are shown in Figure 2 and an inventory of contexts is provided in the Appendix. The topsoil had an average depth of 0.30m and subsoil of 0.05m.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was 20m long, aligned east to west (Figs 2 and 3). Two ditches were found. Both ditches corresponded to geophysical anomalies and produced no finds. Furrows were also present.

Ditch [504]

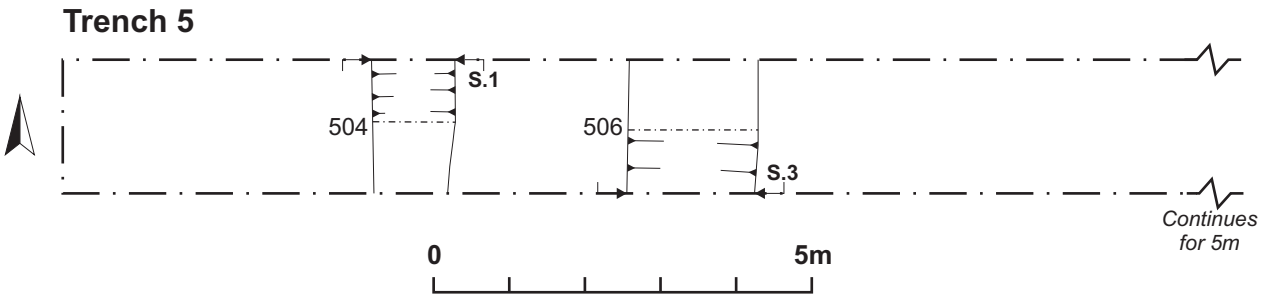
Ditch [504], which was aligned north-west to south-east, was 1.05m wide and 0.31m deep, with a U-shaped profile (Fig 3, section 1). The fill of mid orange-brown sandy clay (503) contained no finds.

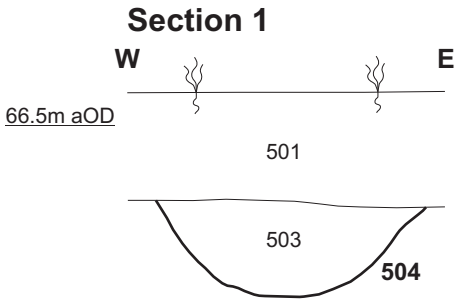
Ditch [506]

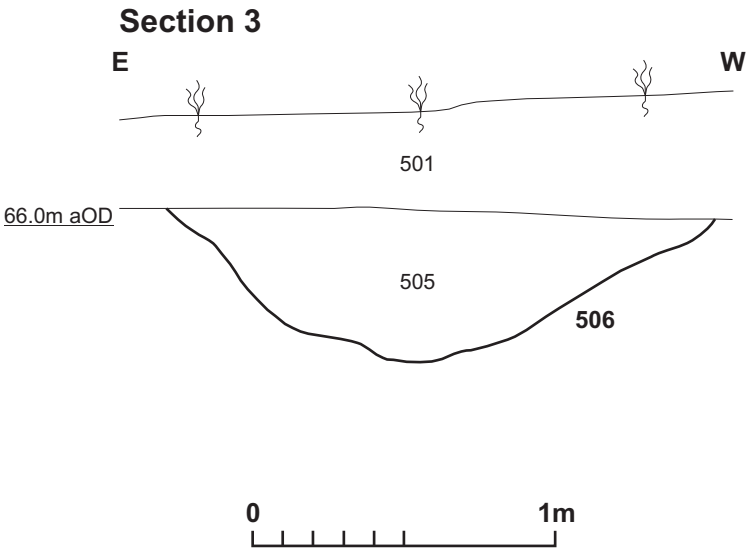
Ditch [506] lay to the east of ditch [504] and was aligned north to south. It was 1.98m wide and 0.50m deep, with a shallow U-shaped profile (Fig 3, section 3). The fill of mid orange-brown sandy clay (505) contained no finds.

Scale 1:2500 (A4)

The excavated trenches, showing geophysical survey results and archaeological features Fig 2







Scale 1:100 & 1:25 Trench 5 with ditches 504 & 506 Fig 3

5 DISCUSSION

The trial trenching generally confirmed the accuracy of the earlier geophysical survey. Although the site was traversed by medieval ridge and furrow ploughing, the majority of archaeological features had not been greatly affected.

The excavations confirmed the presence of a sub-square enclosure and associated ditch. No dating evidence was recovered from the ditches but the form of the enclosure and ditch suggests it may be prehistoric in origin.

There were no other significant archaeological features found by the trial trenching and other magnetic anomalies revealed by the geophysical did not equate with below ground archaeological features. Ridge and furrow cultivation, however, was shown to be present across the site.

The absence of subsoil and the shallow nature of the furrows may suggest that the field had been subject to a degree of truncation sometime in the past. This may also be confirmed by the general dearth of pottery or other finds within the topsoil.

The adverse weather conditions of heavy rain flooded the trenches and also the features causing detailed recording to be hampered. Environmental samples were not taken from archaeological features due to leaching of these deposits by the floodwater. This was agreed with the County Archaeological Advisor.

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APPENDIX: CONTEXT INDEX

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	**30m x 1.80m N-S**	**SP 89095 65894**	**68.53m aOD**	**68.23m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
101	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	0.30m thick	
102	Natural	Mid orange-brown clay with ironstone fragments		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	**50m x 1.80m NE-SW**	**SP 89038 65872**	**69.49m aOD**	**69.27maOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
201	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.32m thick	
202	Natural	Light yellow-brown clay		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	**50m x 1.80m NE to SW**	**SP 89979 65810**	**69.58m aOD**	**69.14m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
301	Topsoil	Mid grey- brown sandy clay	0.44m thick	
302	Natural	Mid yellow-brown clay with ironstone fragments		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
4	**50m x 1.80m NW-SE**	**SP 89079 65844**	**69.13aOD**	**68.68m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
401	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.30-0.35m thick	
402	Subsoil	Light grey-brown sandy clay	0.10m thick	
403	Natural	Mid blue-grey clay		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
5	**20m x 1.80m E to W**	**SP 89135 65856**	**66.21m aOD**	**65.87m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
501	Topsoil	Mid orange-brown sandy clay	0.34m thick	
502	Natural	Mid orange-brown fragmented ironstone with clay infill's		
503	Fill of [504]	Mid brown-orange sandy clay		
504	Cut of ditch	Filled by [503]	1.05m wide and 0.31m deep	
505	Fill of [506]	Mid orange-brown sandy clay		
506	Cut of ditch	Filled by (505)	1.98m wide and 0.50m deep	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
6	**30m x 1.80m NE to SW**	**SP 89140 65835**	**66.02m aOD**	**65.72m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
601	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy clay	0.30m thick	
602	Natural	Mid orange-brown clay		
603	Fill of [604]	Mid grey-brown sandy clay		
604	Cut of furrow	Filled by (603)		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
7	**20m x 2.0m E to W**	**SP 89224 65825**	**61.92m aOD**	**61.60m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
701	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.32m thick	
702	Natural	Mid grey-brown clay		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
8	**50m x 1.80m E to W**	**SP 89194 65751**	**58.30m aOD**	**57.75m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
801	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.30m thick	
802	Subsoil	Light orange-brown sandy clay	0.25m thick	
803	Natural	Mid orange-brown clay		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural

9	**20m x 1.80m E to W**	**SP 89138 65764**	**60.34m aOD**	**60.04m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
901	Topsoil	Mid orange-brown sandy clay	0.30m thick	
902	Natural	Light orange-brown clay		

Trench No	**Length, width & alignment**	**NGR**	**Surface height**	**Depth & height of natural**
10	**50m x 1.80m E to W**	**SP 89055 65784**	**65.72m aOD**	**65.34m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
1001	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.38m thick	
1002	Natural	Mid orange-brown clay		

Trench No	**Length, width & alignment**	**NGR**	**Surface height**	**Depth & height of natural**
11	**20m x 1.80m NW to SE**	**SP 89070 65750**	**63.34m aOD**	**62.93m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
1101	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.41m thick	
1102	Natural	Mid orange-brown clay		

Trench No	**Length, width & alignment**	**NGR**	**Surface height**	**Depth & height of natural**
12	**20m x 1.80m NW to SE**	**SP 89992 65767**	**66.65m aOD**	**66.07m aOD**
Context	***Context type Feature & type***	***Description***	***Dimensions***	***Artefacts/ Samples***
1201	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.48m thick	
1202	Natural	Mid orange-brown clay		

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