



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation of Land at Hillgay, Harbidges Lane, Long Buckby, Northamptonshire



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County Council**



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Report 12/205
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: 139373
Project name	Archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Hillgay, Harbidges Lane, Long Buckby, Northamptonshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Stowe Associates to conduct an archaeological trial trench evaluation of the land at Hillgay, Harbidges Lane, Long Buckby, Northamptonshire, prior to proposed residential development on the site. Three trenches were excavated. Trench 1 adjacent to Holmefield Terrace showed evidence of wall foundations, metalled surface and a later ditch. Trench 2 also identified a wall foundation. Trench 3 showed only a ditch probably the same which was evident in Trench 1. Archaeological features are thought to relate to medieval tenements along the old Cambridge – Coventry road.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Evaluation	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	None	
Current Land use	Disused garden, vegetable plot land	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Hillgay, Harbidges Lane, Long Buckby, Northamptonshire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	1250sq m	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	SP 623 675	
Height OD	131m – 127m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Assistant Archaeological Advisor, NCC	
Project Design originator	NA	
Director/Supervisor	Chris Chinnock	
Project Manager	Mark Holmes	
Sponsor or funding body	Stowe Associates	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	19/11/12	
End date	20/11/12	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Bone, Pottery
Paper	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Site file
Digital	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Mapinfo plans, Word report
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Hillgay, Harbidges Lane, Long Buckby, Northamptonshire	
Serial title & volume	12/205	
Author(s)	Chris Chinnock	
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION OF LAND AT HILLGAY HARBIDGES LANE, LONG BUCKBY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NOVEMBER 2012

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Stowe Associates to conduct an archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Hillgay, Harbidges Lane, Long Buckby, Northamptonshire, prior to a proposed residential development on the site. Three trenches were excavated. Trench 1 adjacent to Holmefield Terrace showed evidence of wall foundations, metalled surface and a later ditch. Trench 2 also identified a wall foundation. Trench 3 showed only a ditch possibly the same which was evident in Trench 1. Archaeological features are thought to relate to medieval tenements along the old Cambridge – Coventry road.

1 INTRODUCTION

In November 2012, Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Stowe Associates to conduct an archaeological evaluation of land at Hillgay, Harbidges Lane, Long Buckby (NGR SP 623 675; Fig 1).

The site lies within an area of significant archaeological interest and sensitivity. Consequently a programme of archaeological evaluation within the area of the proposed buildings was implemented to meet the requirements of a brief issued by Assistant Archaeological Advisor Northamptonshire County Council (NCC 2012) and the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by NA (2012). This report considers evidence from the evaluation.

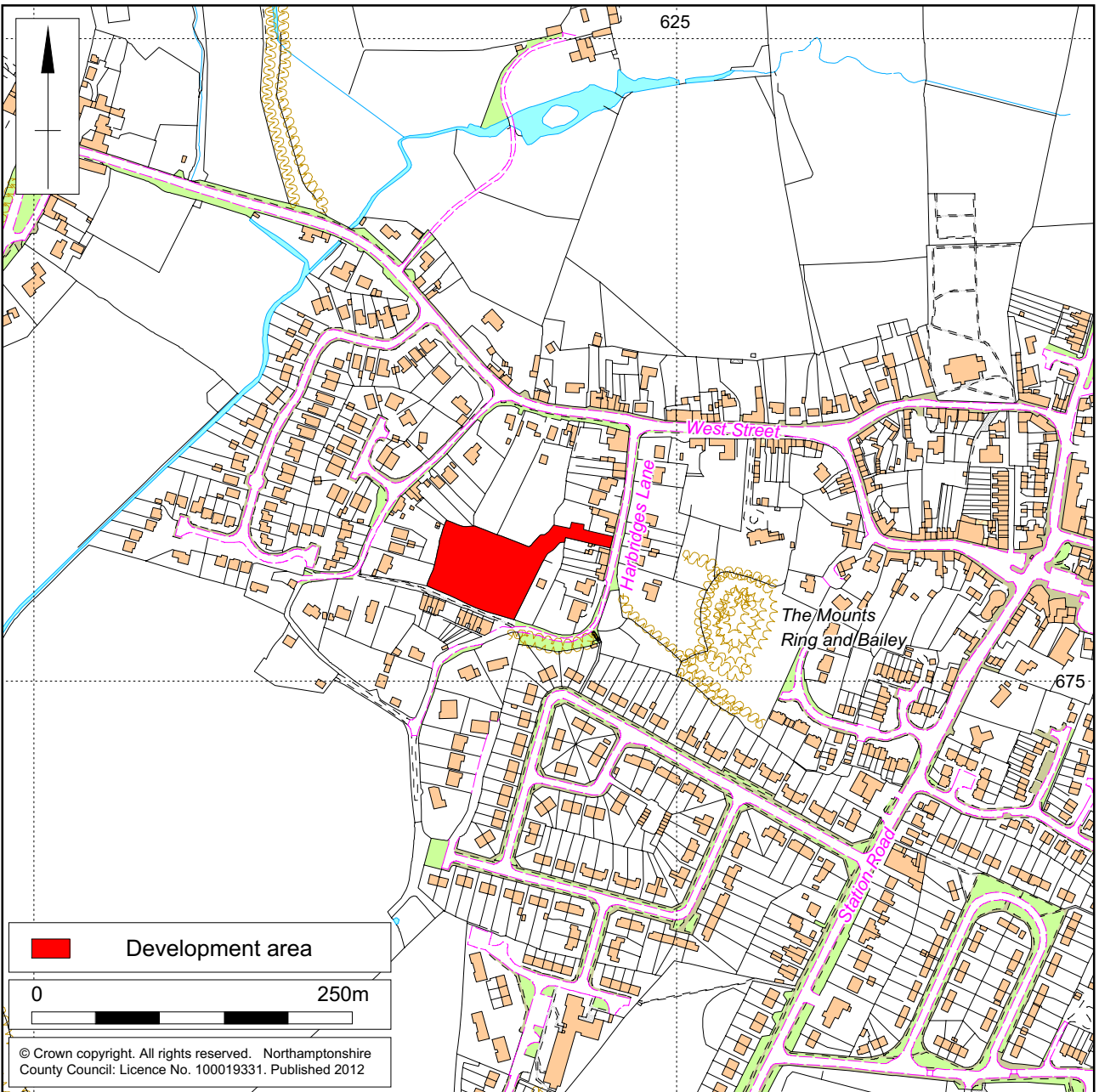
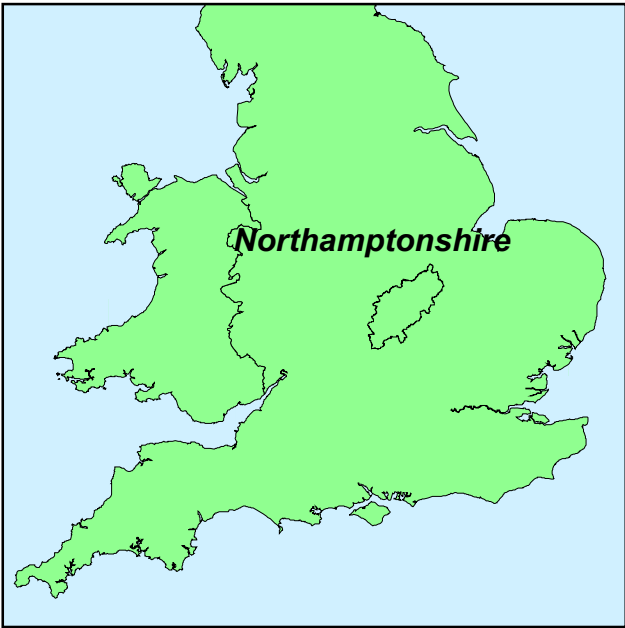
The evaluation comprised the excavation of three trial trenches. The fieldwork was undertaken on the 19-20 November 2012 and the works were monitored by the County Assistant Archaeological Advisor.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The evaluation of the site was designed to provide information that will allow for the effective targeting of further investigation of the site, if required, prior to or during the early phases of its development.

The following information was required to allow the development of a strategy for further investigation of the site:

- *The location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;*
- *The integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.*



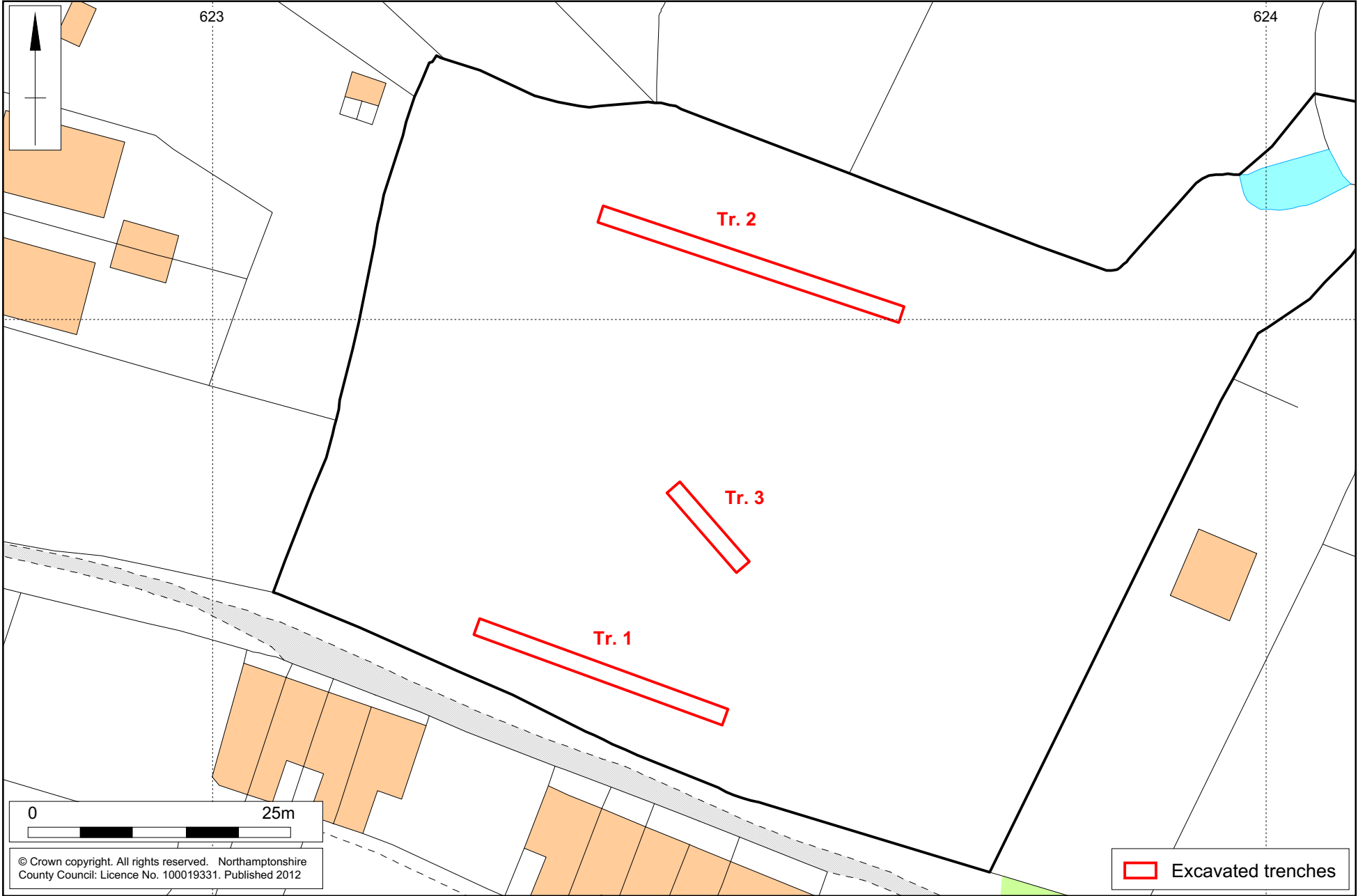
Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1

Scale 1:500

The excavated trenches

Fig 2



The evaluation has been carried out within the parameters suggested by the *East Midlands Regional Research Framework, The Archaeology of the East Midlands: an Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Cooper 2006) and the updated *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for The Historic Environment of The East Midlands* (Knight et al 2012).

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Topography and geology

Long Buckby is a village and civil parish midway between Northampton and Rugby in the Daventry district, western Northamptonshire. The development area is part of the land at Hillgay, north of Harbidges Lane. The site is bounded on all sides by residential property and is to the west of Long Buckby Castle. It lies at approximately 131m-127m aOD. The underlying geology is mapped as Whitby mudstone formation with silt, sand and gravel. (www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html).



The site, looking south-west. Fig 3

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

The proposed development site lies within an area of archaeological importance, within the historic settlement of Long Buckby.

The area in which the site sits may have been one of the earliest settled parts of the village; the more irregular, curvilinear plan form suggesting Saxon, rather than medieval origins (Foard and Ballinger 2000).

During the medieval period Long Buckby appears to have been situated on an important route between Cambridge and Northampton to Coventry and it may have been the presence of this that prompted the construction of a castle in the late 11th or 12th centuries. The route of this road is thought to have been aligned along the southern edge of the site, where Holmfield Terrace now lies. The castle, which lay to the east of the site, had probably been abandoned by the late 13th century. A market was granted to Long Buckby in 1280, but the settlement differs from other market villages in the county in having no other urban attributes.

The Extensive Urban Survey for the village suggests that the site lies within a former medieval tenement row. Historic Environment Record shows several medieval tenement groups and tofts in the immediate vicinity (Table 1). The site itself is has been highlighted as of county importance in the Extensive Urban Survey of Long Buckby (Foard and Ballinger 2000). This applies 'where significant archaeology or historic buildings are known or where it is likely but confirmation is required' (Foard and Ballinger 2000: 52).

Table 1: Relevant nearby Historic Environment Records

HER Preferred Reference	Name
953/4/9	Possible Group of Medieval Tenements
953/4/13	Newlands, Possible Group of Medieval Tenements
953/4/11	Possible Medieval Tenement Group
953/0/17	Possible Medieval/Post Medieval Tofts

Although the road was turnpiked and re-routed in the 18th century, the wool industry, particularly woolcombing, had become increasingly significant by the mid 18th century. However, this industry declined rapidly thereafter and by the early 19th century the village appears to have been one of the poorest in the county (Foard and Ballinger 2000). The boot and shoe trade was introduced in the 1830s and it is this trade that formed the core industry of the village until the 20th century.

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

The three trenches were excavated using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m-wide toothless ditching bucket. Trench 1 was 25m long by 1.8m wide, Trench 2 was 30m long by 1.8m wide and Trench 3 was 10m long by 1.8m wide. The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological supervision to reveal natural substrate. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately at the side of the excavated area. All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

The excavated areas were cleaned sufficiently to define any features. The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were fully recorded, following standard NA procedures (NA 2011). All deposits were given a separate context number in a sequence continuing from those allocated during the evaluation. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. Unstratified animal bones and modern material were not retained.

The location of the trench was surveyed and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A full photographic record comprising both 35mm black and white negatives and colour transparencies was maintained, supplemented with digital images. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

The evaluation conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised Oct 2008). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with English Heritage, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) (EH 2006). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the brief issued by the Northamptonshire County Council (NCC 2012) and the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2012).

All trenches were backfilled with their up-cast, lightly compacted by the mechanical digger.

5 EVALUATION RESULTS

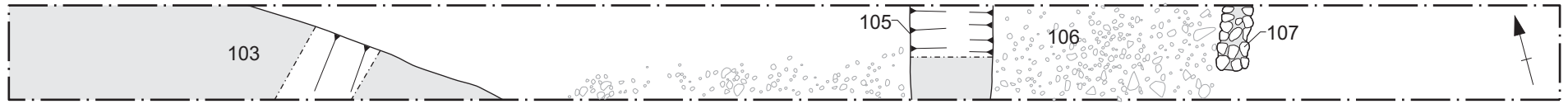
Trench 1 was located at the southern edge of the site alongside Holmeffield terrace which represents the line of the medieval road. This was in order to test for evidence for medieval tenements facing this road. A metallated surface (106) with an overlying lower course of a crude stone wall (107). There was also a ditch [105] cutting through the metallated surface (106) which may relate to a ditch recorded in Trench 2 [204] on a similar alignment.

Trench 2 was placed at the northern edge of the site to try and pick up any activity or boundaries behind the suggested frontages along Holmeffield Terrace. One small ditch was recorded running roughly north-south.

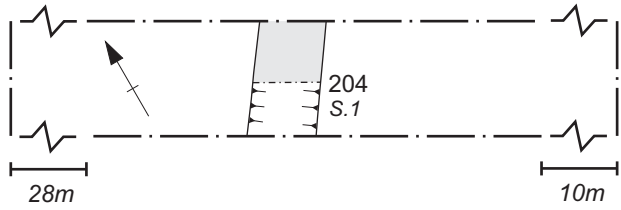
Trench 3 was placed in the centre of the site aligned north-west by south-east. A section of walling (304) similar to that in Trench 1 was discovered aligned roughly east-west.

Scales 1:100 & 1:20 (A4)

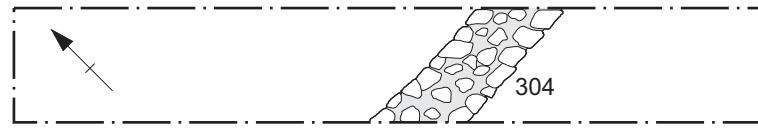
Trench 1



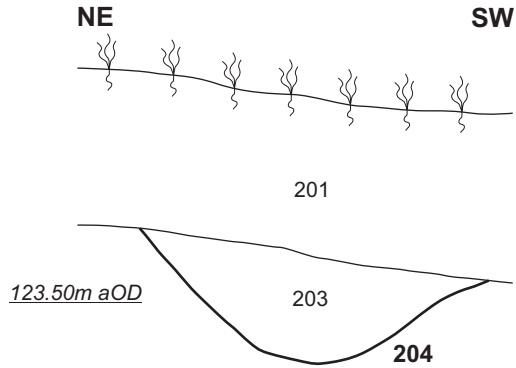
Trench 2



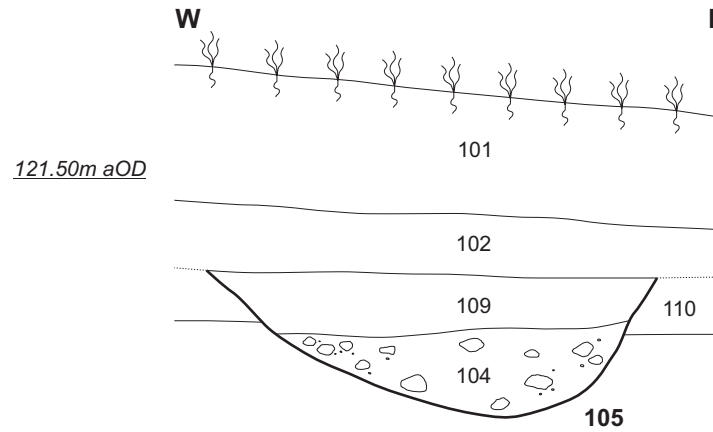
Trench 3



Section 1



Section 2



Plans and sections of the excavated trenches and archaeological features
Fig 4

5.1 Trench 1

The trench was 25m long by 1.8m wide and aligned east by west. At this point the land drops away to the south-west (Fig 5).

The natural substrate (103) was light orange-brown clay sand with pebble inclusions throughout, occurring at approximately 0.65m below ground level.



Trench 1, looking west. Fig 5



Metalled surface and crude walling in Trench 1, looking east. Fig 6

A metalled surface (106), made up of river worn cobbles and rough slabs of ironstone, was discovered in the centre of the trench (Fig 4, 5 and 6). It was present across the entire width of the trench and extended solidly (save for one patch of robbed out material) for 4m and as patches of broken up material for a further 7m. The stones were tightly compacted into the underlying clay; medieval pottery and animal bone were recovered from in amongst the stones.

At the eastern end of the cobbled area remnants of a crude uncoursed wall (107) overlay the cobbled surface. It was constructed using much the same material (Fig 4, 5 and 6). The stones making up the wall were river worn cobbles and rough slabs of ironstone, up to 250mm in size, these were bonded with clay rather than mortar. The wall may have extended across the entire width of the trench but it seems that some has been lost, possibly robbed out for use elsewhere. The surviving part of the wall was 0.5m wide, and survived to a height of roughly 0.2m from the metalled surface.

A later linear ditch [105] cut through the metalled surface in the centre of the trench running north-south (Fig 4 and 7). It was roughly 1.0m wide and roughly 0.50m deep. No finds were recovered from the ditch. The lower fill was friable mid brown-orange clay loam with occasional pebble inclusions. The upper fill was a dark brown clay loam with few inclusions. This ditch looks to cut through hillwash/subsoil (110) and is overlain by a further deposit of hillwash/subsoil (102).

The subsoil (102) was 0.29m thick and consisted of mid brown silty clay, overlaid by topsoil (101) 0.36m thick, a dark grey-brown clay loam. Both the subsoil and topsoil were heavily disturbed by root action.



Ditch [105] looking south. Fig 7

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 (Fig 4) was 30m long by 1.8m wide and aligned east- north-east by west-south-west.

The natural substrate (202) was a mid orange-grey gravelly clay occurring between 0.27m and 0.41m below ground level. One ditch [204] was present, aligned roughly north-south and crossed the width of the trench. It was 0.9m wide and survived to a depth of 0.2m. No finds were recovered. The fill was a soft dark grey-brown silty clay with occasional pebble/flint inclusions.

This trench was near the top of the slope and no subsoil was present at this point. The topsoil (201), was dark grey-black loam and was heavily disturbed by root action.

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 (Figs 4 and 8) was 10m long by 1.8m wide and aligned north-west by south-east.

The natural substrate (303) was comprised of buff clay with occasional stone/flint inclusions, occurring at around 0.4 to 0.45m below ground level.

A length of wall [304] was recorded aligned east-west, diagonally across the trench (Fig 4 and 8). The wall was 1.0m wide. Much like (107) it was made up of river worn cobbles and rough ironstones slabs, again there was no sign of mortar and the stones were bonded with clay with no coursing apparent, though only the very bottom of the wall has survived at this point. However, unlike (107), the two sides of the wall were shaped to give a facing with the rough material forming a core.

The subsoil (302) was noted as a buff clay loam overlain by a dark grey-brown clay loam topsoil (301). Both the topsoil and subsoil were heavily disturbed by root action.



Trench 3, looking north-west. Fig 8

6 THE FINDS

6.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 8 sherds with a total weight of 77g. It all occurred in a single context, (106), the top of a cobbled surface. It was quantified using the chronology and coding system of the Northamptonshire county ceramic type-series (CTS), as follows:

F330: Shelly Coarseware, AD1100 - 1400. 7 sherds, 71g.

F329: Potterspurty Ware, AD1250 - 1600. 1 sherd, 6g.

Both fabric types are very common finds in the region. The sherds are all in fairly good condition, although much of the calcareous material has leached out of the shelly wares. This is likely to be due to the soil conditions rather than redeposition, as they otherwise exhibit little wear, and thus appear to be reliably stratified. The assemblage consists entirely of bodysherds, other than a fairly large rimsherd from an F330 jar. The deposit which produced them is most likely to date to the mid 13th – mid 14th century, with the relatively small amount of F329 suggesting the earlier part of the date range.

6.2 Faunal Remains by Karen Deighton

Approximately 500g of animal bone were recovered from a medieval cobbled surface (106) during the course of excavation. This material was analysed using standard zooarchaeological methods in order to determine the taxa present and the state of preservation.

Preservation was good with only a low level of surface abrasion and fragmentation. Fragmentation consisted of both old and new breaks. The old breaks were apparently the result of butchery. Canid gnawing was also noted on a number of fragments.

The bones consisted of the following:

- A cattle metatarsal shaft which had been both gnawed and chopped longitudinally
- Fragments of a cattle humerus shaft which exhibited fresh breaks.
- A possible fragment of the blade of a cattle scapula.
- A distal shaft of ovicaprid (sheep/goat) femur which exhibited both canid gnawing and fresh breaks.
- A sheep/goat metatarsal shaft which had been both gnawed and chopped diagonally.
- A portion of small ungulate rib.

Little can be said of the animal economy of the site other than that it involved cattle and sheep/goat.

7 DISCUSSION

The archaeological features recorded at Hillgay Harbidges Lane, Long Buckby seem to largely confirm the suggestion that the site lies within a medieval tenement row. Trench 1 located at the southern edge of the site contained evidence for a metalled surface and possible walling, both of which may relate to medieval tenements or frontages along the medieval Cambridge to Coventry road (now Holmefield Terrace). The pottery recovered from the metalled surface (106) confirms a medieval date for these features (mid 13th – mid 14th century). Further walling was recorded in Trench 3 running perpendicular to the length in Trench 1. It is possible that these two elements relate directly to one another, although the walling in Trench 3 (304) looks much more structural than the rough uncoursed walling in Trench 1 (107)

The ditch [204] in Trench 2 is of uncertain date as no finds were recovered. It is possible that it is contemporary with and relates to the medieval activity to the south of the site as part of a toft/croft arrangement. It may, however, also be the same as ditch [105] in Trench 1 which cuts through the subsoil and, though no finds were recovered, is certainly much later than the metalled surface which produced medieval pottery.

Taking into account other work conducted in the area and nearby Historic Environment Record data, these results fit neatly into what we already know about medieval Long Buckby. The site was listed in the Extensive Urban Survey (Foard and Ballinger 2000) as being of County importance with archaeological material likely but unconfirmed. This evaluation confirms the presence of medieval settlement along the old Cambridge-Coventry road.

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WEBSITES

www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html

Appendix: Context Inventory

Trench 1	Length, Width & Alignment 25mx1.8m E-W		Surface Height 122.62m aOD	Depth & Height of Natural 0.66m 121.96m aOD
Context	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey clay loam	0.36m thick	
102	Subsoil	Mid brown silty loam	0.29m thick	
103	Natural	Mid brown-tan clay sand	0.10m thick	
104	Fill of Ditch [105]	Mid brown/orange clay loam with poorly sorted pebbles inclusions <30mm	1m wide, 1.8m long 0.25m deep	
105	Cut of Ditch	Shallow linear ditch running north-south across trench width.	1m wide, 1.8m long, 0.25m deep	
106	Metalled Surface	Tightly compacted river cobbles and ironstone bedded in natural clay.	1.8m wide, 4-11m long	Medieval pottery, animal bone
107	Wall	Crude walling, clay bonded. River worn cobbles and ironstone.	0.5m wide, 1m long, 0.2m high	
108	Hillwash	Dark brown/black clay loam, very few inclusions.	8m long, 1.8m wide	
109	Fill of Ditch [105]	Mid-Dark brown clay loam, few inclusions. Upper fill of ditch.	1.2m wide, 1.8m long, 0.17m deep	
110	Subsoil	Same as (102), Only differentiated for the sake of Section 2	0.15m deep at section 2	

Trench 2	Length, width & alignment 30m x 1.8m E-W		Surface Height 125.69m aOD	Depth & Height of Natural 0.35m 125.34m aOD
Context	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Topsoil	Dark grey/black loam	0.27m thick	
202	Natural	Mid orange/grey gravelly clay	0.08m thick	
203	Fill of Ditch	Dark grey/brown silty clay	1.8m long, 0.9m wide. 0.2m deep	
204	Cut of Ditch	Cut of shallow linear ditch running N-S across width of trench 2	1.8m long, 0.9m wide, 0.2m deep	

Trench 3	Length, width & alignment 10m x 1.8m NW-SE		Surface Height 122.28m aOD	Depth & Height of Natural 0.5m 121.83m aOD
Context	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
301	Topsoil	Dark grey/brown clay loam, root disturbance	0.3m thick	
302	Subsoil	Buff clay loam, root disturbance	0.15m thick	
303	Natural	Buff clay with occasional stone inclusions ,20mm	0.05m thick	
304	Wall	Poor quality walling made up of river cobbles and ironstones bedded into clay.	1m wide, 2m long	



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