



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

## Archaeological mitigation works at Plots 8W and 9, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire January 2013



### Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park  
Northampton NN4 8BE  
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822  
e. [sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk)  
w. [www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk)



Northamptonshire  
County Council

James Ladocha

Report 13/23

January 2013



## STAFF

Project manager	Adam Yates BA MifA
Fieldwork	James Ladocha BA
Text and illustration	James Ladocha

## QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified by	Adam Yates		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>Oasis No. 142106</b>	
Project name	Archaeological mitigation works at Plots 8W and 9, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire, January 2013		
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Bellway Homes to carry out mitigation works on land at Plots 8W and 9, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire. This comprised the observation of groundworks during the development of a new housing estate. The natural substrate was encountered within all of the excavated areas but no features of archaeological interest were observed. A small number of worked flints, some pottery and other finds were recovered from the topsoil.		
Project type	Mitigation		
Site status	None		
Previous work	Butler & Yates 2011; Leigh 2002 & 2003; Wilson 2004		
Current land use	Overgrown pasture		
Future work	None		
Monument type/ period	Medieval ridge and furrow earthworks, undated linear feature		
Significant finds	None		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Plots 8W and 9, Middlemore, Daventry		
Study area	4ha		
OS Easting & Northing	456195 264856		
Height aOD	c149m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project brief originator	Liz Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council		
Project Design originator	Adam Yates, Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Director/Supervisor	James Ladocha, Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project Manager	Adam Yates, Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Sponsor or funding body	Bellway Homes		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date	08/01/13		
End date	17/01/13		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>		<b>Location:</b>	<b>Content</b>
Physical	Northamptonshire Archaeology archive store	1 small finds box	
Paper		Site monitoring sheets, site registers, annotated plan, photographic archive, background documents	
Digital		Client PDF report	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
Title	Archaeological mitigation works at Plots 8W and 9, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire, January 2013		
Serial title & volume	13/23		
Author(s)	James Ladocha		
Page numbers	8		
Date	30/01/13		

# Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	1
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	1
4	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	3
5	METHODOLOGY	3
6	MITIGATION RESULTS	5
7	THE FINDS	6
	7.1 Worked flint	6
	7.2 Pottery and other finds	7
8	DISCUSSION	7

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Tables

Table 1: Summary of worked flint

### Figures

Front cover: Stripped area of Plot 9, looking east

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Area of investigation

Fig 3: Area of leveled ground, Plot 9, looking north-west

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION WORKS  
AT PLOTS 8W AND 9, MIDDLEMORE FARM  
DAVENTRY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
JANUARY 2013**

*Abstract*

*Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Bellway Homes to carry out mitigation works on land at Plots 8W and 9, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire. This comprised the observation of groundworks during the development of a new housing estate. The natural substrate was encountered within all of the excavated areas but no features of archaeological interest were observed. A small number of worked flints, some pottery and other finds were recovered from the topsoil.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Bellway Homes to undertake mitigation works at the proposed development site on land at Plots 8W and 9, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire (NGR 456195 264856; Fig 1). The mitigation comprised the observation of groundworks within the 4ha development area.

The work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2012) to meet the requirements of the local authority brief, issued by Northamptonshire County Council (Mordue 2012). The works were requested in response to a reserved matter application submitted by Bellway Homes for new housing.

**2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

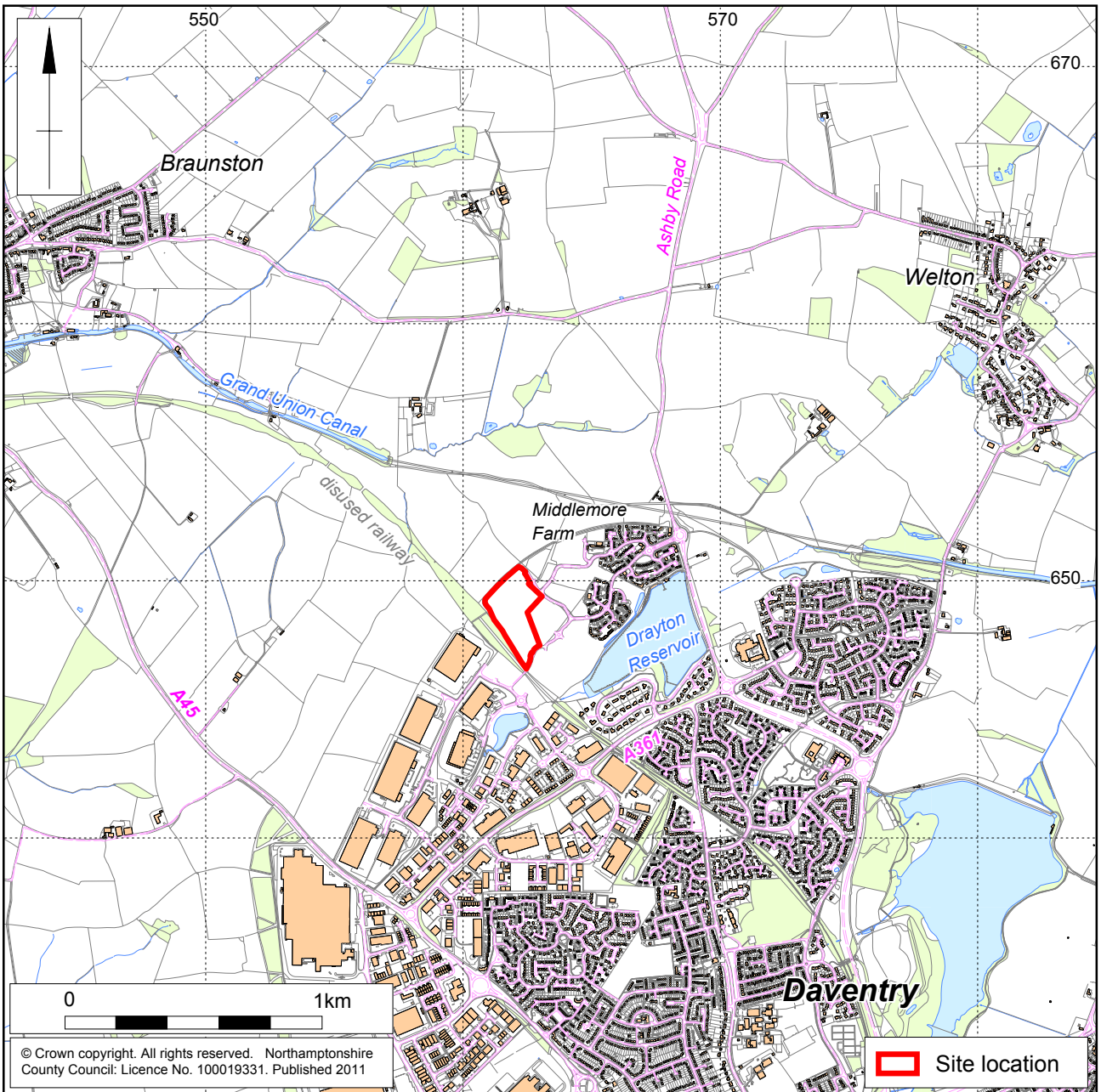
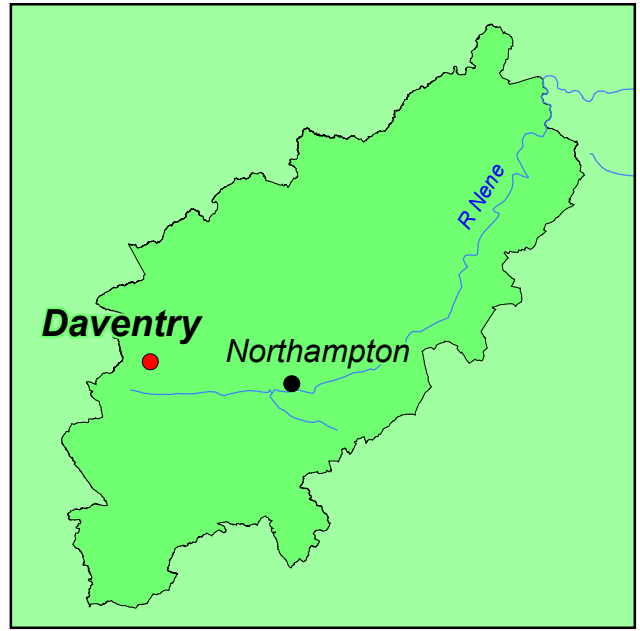
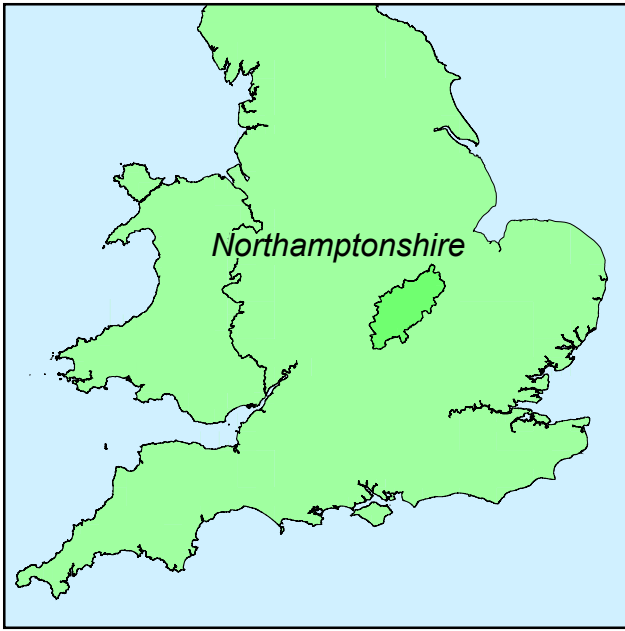
The development area is located on flat ground c2.5km to the north of Daventry town centre. Development at Middlemore Farm has been in progress since 2002. Plots 8W and 9 lie to the west of the existing housing zone. A road associated with the development forms the eastern boundary of Plots 8W and 9. The western boundary of the site is formed by a disused railway line between Daventry and Braunston. Fields lie to the north and south of the site.

The underlying geology comprises Middle Lias Silts and Clays as defined by Northamptonshire County Council Environmental Services Laboratory (ESL 1987, 1999).

**3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

A substantial amount of archaeological work has already been undertaken in advance of the earlier developments. In brief, prehistoric activity comprising a flint scatter (HER1258) was recorded adjacent to the current study area. Portions of a small Roman settlement comprising ditches, pits and artefact scatters was excavated between 2002 and 2004 (Leigh 2002 and 2003, Wilson 2004 and HER639/0/2, 648). To the north-west of the site lies a partially defined enclosure identified from aerial photographs (HER658).





Scale 1:25,000

Site location Fig 1

The site lies some distance from the core of the medieval town of Daventry and is likely to have been farmland in the medieval period. The HER and aerial photographs (RAF 1947) suggest the presence of ridge and furrow over much of the Middlemore Farm development area (HER5731/0/1, Wilson 2004).

A geophysical survey was undertaken of plots 8W and 9 in 2011 as a pre-cursor to the mitigation works. This confirmed the presence of a former medieval ridge and furrow cultivation scheme on a north-west to south-east alignment across the whole area. Other than that no other archaeological features were identified (Butler & Yates 2011).

Middlemore Farm house has been dated to around 1752 (HER649/0/10, 649/0/11). The Grand Union Canal courses through the Braunston tunnel (HER442/1/13) to the north of the site. There are a number of brick-built air vents along its route.

#### **4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the work was to ensure that any archaeological remains within the area of groundworks were appropriately investigated and recorded. The objectives were established in pursuit of national and regional research agendas (EH 1991 and Knight *et al* 2012).

The aims of the mitigation works, as determined by the Written Scheme of Investigation (NA 2012), were to:

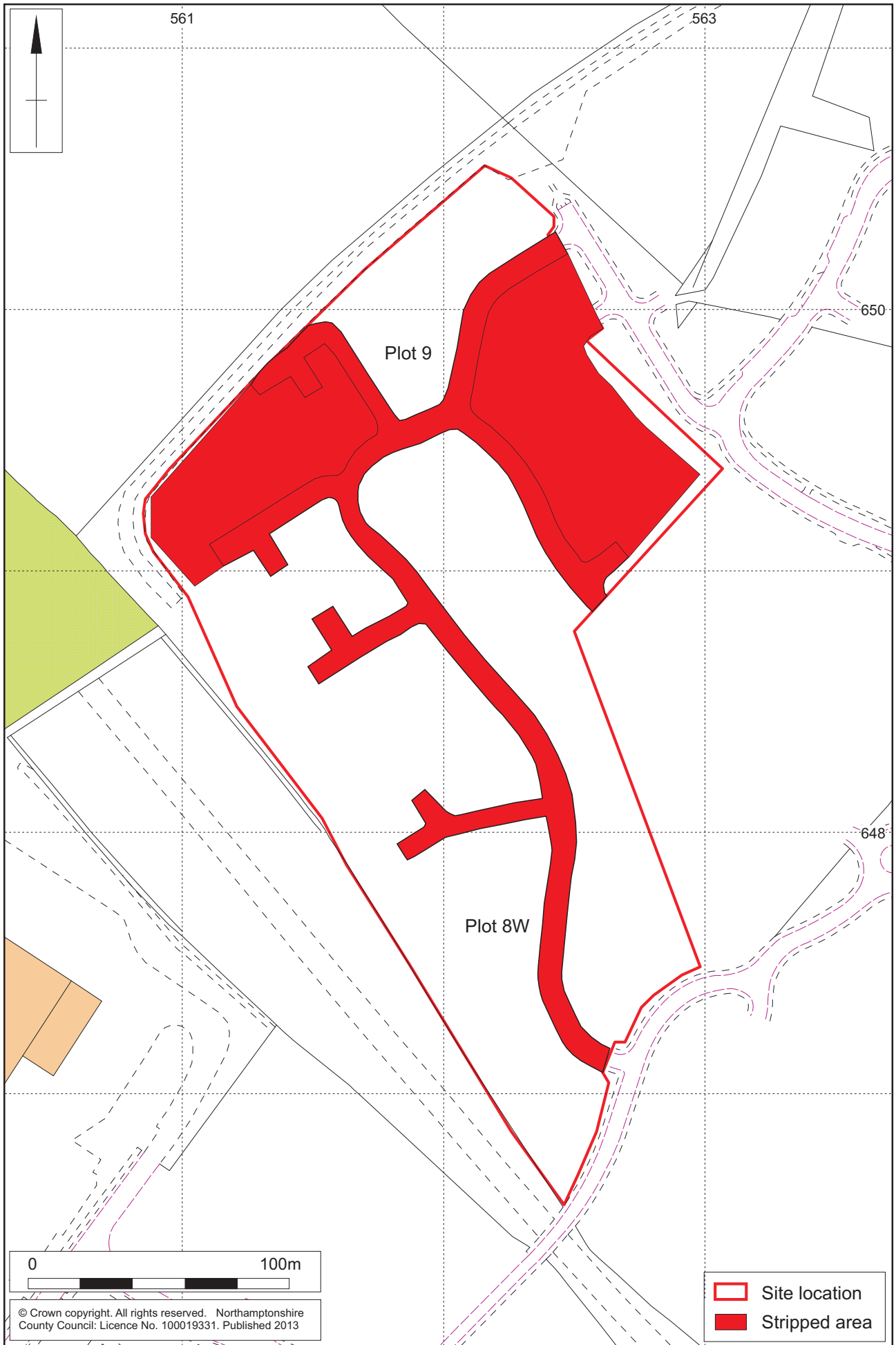
- Establish whether any archaeological remains were present and subject to disturbance by the groundworks associated with the proposed development;
- Establish the date, nature, extent and significance of any such encountered remains.

If archaeological remains were encountered they were expected to be associated with the early Romano-British rural settlement encountered in Plots 1 and 2 to the north-east of the current development area. As such it was hoped that the works would contribute towards specific regional research objectives on the period. However, in light of the overall lack of archaeological features this was not possible.

#### **5 METHODOLOGY**

Observed groundworks within the development area mainly comprised the stripping of topsoil from the proposed access roads and two larger areas within Plot 9 (Fig 2). This largely exposed the natural substrate. However, due to the need to reduce contamination of stripped topsoil with natural substrate, small patches of topsoil were occasionally left behind. Stripping was undertaken by mechanical excavators with toothless ditching buckets.

Levelling of housing plots was also observed within the north-eastern stripped area. This involved the removal of up to 0.40m of material from the stripped level. Furthermore, the excavation of trenches for drainage services was monitored. These were excavated within the confines of the already stripped access roads and were up to 4.0m deep.



Scale 1:2,000

Area of investigation Fig 2



Potential archaeological features and deposits were cleaned and investigated by hand. All recording on site followed standard Northamptonshire Archaeology recording methods (NA 2011). A full photographic record comprising 35mm monochrome negatives and digital photographs, which form the principal photographic record for the purpose of this report, was maintained. A copy of the developer's scale plan was annotated with reference to the pro-forma record sheets.

Large areas of the observed groundworks were scanned with a metal detector, which provided minimal results. A small number of modern iron objects were detected, probably relating to small pieces of discarded farm equipment.

The archaeological investigation was undertaken in accordance with current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance (IfA 2008), Code of Conduct (IfA 2010) and the procedural documents of English Heritage (EH 1991; 2009).

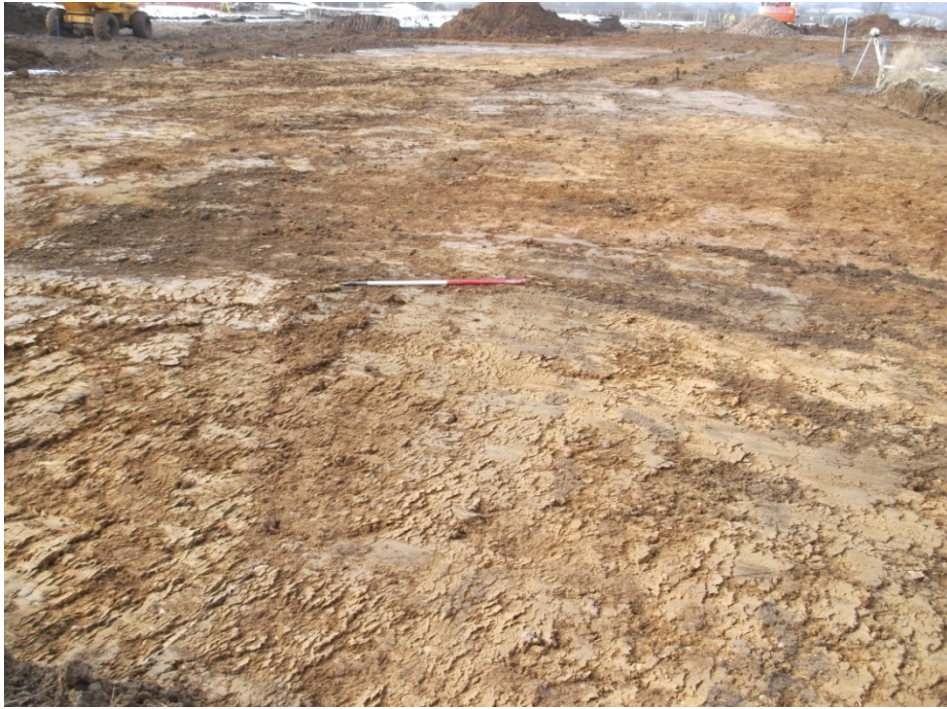
Stripping of the road corridor and house footprints in the northern area of the site did not reveal any archaeological features. Accordingly archaeological mitigation works were discontinued in agreement with the Assistant County Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council.

## **6 MITIGATION RESULTS**

The natural substrate was encountered across the vast majority of the observed groundworks. It was mid orange-brown sandy clay with frequent rounded and sub-angular flint. In Plot 9 the natural substrate became less sandy, with fewer inclusions, and included patches of yellow-orange mottled with grey-blue clay (Fig 3). Furthermore, at greater depth, encountered within the service trenches, the natural substrate became dark grey-blue clay with occasional small to medium limestone inclusions.

In Plot 9 a shallow layer of mid orange-brown sandy clay subsoil was encountered rarely. The majority of the observed natural substrate was overlain by between 0.30m and 0.40m of dark grey-brown clay loam topsoil with frequent gravel inclusions.

The furrows detected on the geophysical survey were not readily apparent within the observed areas but may have been represented by patches of sandier 'natural substrate', which occasionally appeared to lie on the same north-west to south-east alignment.



Area of levelled ground, Plot 9, looking north-west Fig 3

## 7 THE FINDS

### 7.1 Worked flint by Yvonne Wolframm-Murray

Three pieces of worked flint were recovered during the topsoil stripping in Plots 8W+9, the flakes were recovered from the access road in Plot 8W. The artefacts comprised of two flakes and one piece of shatter, summarised in Table 1 below.

The condition of the artefacts is good. Post-depositional edge damage is present on all artefacts consisting of occasional irregular nicks on one or both lateral edges. The raw material was a light and dark grey-brown vitreous flint. The cortex present on the dorsal surfaces of the flakes was light and mid brown and worn. It is likely that the raw material was locally procured gravel flints. There was patination present on two flakes.

The worked flints are not directly dateable but their technological characteristics suggest a broadly early Neolithic to late Bronze Age date.

Table 1 Summary of worked flint

Location	Flake/Blade	Portion	Material	Patination	Comments
R 14 (B)	Shatter	-	light brown-grey vitreous flint	-	-
R 13 (B)	Flake	Whole	vitreous flint	medium	post-depositional edge damage
R 13 (B)	Flake	Whole	dark brown-grey vitreous flint	slight	Squat flake; post-depositional edge damage

## 7.2 Pottery and other finds by Tora Hylton

The finds were recovered from the main north to south access road running through Plots 8W and 9; with the exception of one sherd from a furrow, all the finds were recovered from topsoil. The assemblage includes three sherds of pottery (26.4g), a fragment of tile (15.2g) and an iron object, most probably a nail.

Chronologically the earliest datable sherd was recovered from Plot 8W (Area R13) and although extremely abraded and undiagnostic the fabric suggests that it may date anywhere from the late prehistoric through to the Roman period. Later wares are represented by a base sherd in glazed red earthenware and a rim sherd from a porcelain bowl ornamented with an applied motif (sprigging) of vine leaves and grapes. Both sherds date to the 18th/19th centuries.

Other finds include an abraded fragment of tile, which could date from the Roman to medieval period, and a possible nail.

## 8 DISCUSSION

The observation of groundworks at Plots 8W and 9, Middlemore Farm revealed no features of archaeological interest. The natural substrate was encountered within all of the observed areas. The former medieval ridge and furrow cultivation scheme detected on the 2011 geophysical survey was not readily apparent but may have been represented by sandier patches of 'natural substrate'.

The finds recovered from the works were all residual from topsoil and subsoil contexts. Whilst these indicate a general utilisation of the landscape they do not represent any specific episodes of activity.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Butler, A, & Yates, A, 2011 *Archaeological Geophysical Survey at Plots 8W and 9, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology report, **11/172**

EH 1991 *The Management for Archaeological Projects 2*, English Heritage

EH 2009 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*, English Heritage

ESL 1987 *Proposed Development of Daventry- Northern Area: Preliminary Geotechnical Appraisal*, Environmental Services Laboratory

ESL 1999 *Proposed residential development: Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Desk-top study report*, Environmental Services Laboratory

IfA 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Institute for Archaeologists

IfA 2010 *Code of Conduct*, Institute for Archaeologists

Knight, D, Vyner, B, Allen, C, 2012 *East Midlands Heritage: An updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands*, University of Nottingham and York Archaeological Trust

Leigh, D J, 2002 *Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire: Archaeological Watching Brief*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

Leigh, D J, 2003 *Excavation of Roman Features at Plot 1, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

Mordue, E, 2012 *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Investigation and Publication on land at Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire*, Planning: Northamptonshire County Council

NA 2011 *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

NA 2012 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Mitigation Works on land at Plots 8W and 9, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

Wilson, N, 2004 *Archaeological Excavation: Site 2, Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire*, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd



Northamptonshire County Council

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

## Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park  
Northampton NN4 8BE

t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822

e. [sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

w. [www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk)



Northamptonshire  
County Council