



**Northamptonshire
County Council**

Northamptonshire Archaeology

**Archaeological Evaluation
(Fieldwalking and Metal Detecting Phase)
Norton Subcourse Quarry
Norfolk
December 2004**



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**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
(FIELDWALKING AND METAL DETECTING PHASE)
NORTON SUBCOURSE QUARRY, NORFOLK
DECEMBER 2004**

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Archaeological Evaluation (Fieldwalking and Metal Detecting Phase), Norton Subcourse Quarry, Norfolk	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by The Guildhouse Consultancy on behalf of RMC Aggregates (Eastern) Ltd to carry out a fieldwalking and metal detector survey of land to the west of Norton Subcourse Quarry, Norfolk. The site comprised two fields from which the only noteworthy artefacts recovered were a small quantity of Neolithic/early Bronze Age flints. Previous fieldwalking produced similar assemblages but included sherds of Roman and medieval pottery. Neither project noted significant concentrations of material indicative of occupation.	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Fieldwalking and metal detector survey	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	NSMR 22659, 22673, 22675, 22693	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	unknown	
Monument type and period		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Norfolk	
Site address (including postcode)	Fields west of Norton Subcourse Quarry, nr Great Yarmouth, Norfolk	
Easting (use numerical 100km grid square no.)	6 398	
Northing	2 996	
Height OD	16-22 m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Norfolk Landscape Archaeology	
Project Design originator	Andy Mudd	
Director/Supervisor	Andy Mudd/Paul Mason	
Project Manager	Andy Mudd	
Sponsor or funding body	RMC Aggregates (Eastern) Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	29 th November 2004	
End date	1 st December 2004	
ARCHIVES		
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		Pottery, tile, metal
Paper		Fieldwalking records, specialist reports
Digital		PDF report copy
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title		
Serial title & volume		
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

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Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by The Guildhouse Consultancy on behalf of RMC Eastern Ltd to carry out a fieldwalking and metal detector survey of land to the west of Norton Subcourse Quarry, Norfolk. The site comprised two fields from which the only noteworthy artefacts recovered were a small quantity of Neolithic/early Bronze Age flints. The rest of the finds were post-medieval in date and include a small assemblage of pottery, a larger quantity of roof tile and brick and a single copper alloy fitting. Earlier fieldwalking survey of the area had produced similar small quantities of finds, which included sherds of Roman and medieval pottery. Neither survey noted significant concentrations of material indicative of occupation at any time.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by The Guildhouse Consultancy for RMC Eastern Ltd to carry out a fieldwalking and metal detecting survey of land to the west of Norton Subcourse Quarry, Norfolk (centred on NGR TG 398 996; Fig 1). The project was undertaken to inform proposals for the expansion of the existing quarrying operation.

The proposed development area (PDA) comprises two adjacent fields lying to the north-west of the small settlement of Norton Subcourse. The fields have a combined area of c23 hectares and are located on arable farmland bounded by Ferry Road to the west and the existing quarry to the east. Approximately 17 hectares of the PDA were suitable for fieldwalking – the remainder being covered by woodland/tree-belts.

2 GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The PDA straddles the parishes of Norton Subcourse and Heckingham to the east of the River Chet. The land slopes gently from the south-east (c22m OD) to the north-west (c16m OD) with a sub-circular hollow - most probably a natural feature - located in the south-east corner of the northern field.

The geology within the PDA consists of glacial sand and gravel in the north and Corton Sands to the south. Bore-holes cut for mineral exploration revealed deposits of chalky Boulder Clay lying below the topsoil in the centre of the site (Havercroft 2001, Section 4.2)

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A desk-based study and an assessment of the aerial photographic evidence by The Guildhouse Consultancy identified a number of areas of archaeological interest both within and outside of the PDA (Havercroft 2001). The main findings within the PDA included light surface scatters of prehistoric flintwork, and Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery which were recovered during a fieldwalking survey in the part of the site lying within Heckingham parish (NSMR 22659, NSMR 22693 and NSMR22675 - Fig 3). It is unclear whether any of this material occurs in significant concentrations. The only feature identified from the Norfolk Historic Environment Record was a track of presumed post-medieval date whose course is, in any case, questionable and may have lain elsewhere (Havercroft 2001, 35, NSMR 10354).

4 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The aims and methods of the survey have been outlined in an approved project design prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2004).

The overall objectives of the archaeological investigation were to enable an assessment of the potential and significance of the present remains on the site and to locate any further archaeological remains. The fieldwalking component sought to provide information regarding the extent, distribution and character of any archaeological surface remains across the proposed development area.

Fieldwalking was undertaken on the available 17 hectares between 29th November and 1st December 2004. The survey was undertaken by walking systematically along parallel transects spaced every 20m, with surface finds collected from a corridor extending about 1m to each side of the transect line, the overall sample of the surface area thus being about 10%.

All non-modern artefacts were collected. Standard Northamptonshire Archaeology Fieldwalking Record Sheets were used. These include weighting factors such as ground surface visibility and weather conditions.

The survey also included the use of a metal detector by an experienced archaeological detectorist (Steve Critchley). At a general level the detector survey discriminated against iron objects, since they tend to be ubiquitous and undiagnostic of type or date. Provision was made for detecting on a closer interval (up to 'blanket coverage' in a limited area) if particular concentrations of artefacts were discovered, but in the event this proved unnecessary.

Transect locations were surveyed in the field from the field boundaries using an optical square, tapes and ranging poles. The distribution of each category of finds was mapped at a scale of 1:2500 and analysed to identify meaningful concentrations.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Summary

Fifteen north-south transects, set at 20m intervals, were walked in the north field (Field 1) of the PDA and nine transects in the south field (Field 2). The distributions of finds collected are shown in Figure 2.

The conditions for the survey were generally good. Both fields had been ploughed and were lightly weathered. The survey was undertaken in good light and dry weather conditions. There was no surface water and the transects were free of obstruction.

The topsoil in both fields was a dark grey/brown sandy loam. A dense scatter of complete and shattered flint nodules was present in Field 2 and ran into the south end of Field 1 before dispersing down-slope. The presence of these flints may have adversely influenced the detection of worked pieces. The soils at the northern end of the site were notable for their very high gravel content.

The results of the fieldwalking are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of finds

Field	Flint	Pottery					Tile / Brick	Metal
		Prehistoric	Roman	Saxon	Medieval	Post-medieval		
1	4	0	0	0	0	5	44	1
2	1	0	0	0	0	3	16	0
Total	5	0	0	0	0	8	60	1

The total assemblage consisted of five pieces of flint, eight sherds of post-medieval pottery, 60 broken fragments of tile/brick and one copper alloy object. Their distributions are shown on Figure 2.

5.2 The Worked Flint

by Alex Thorne BSc

Five pieces of worked flint were recovered. Four were from Field 1 and one from Field 2. Of those found in Field 1, three could loosely be attributed to its south-east quadrant, the other was found to the north-west. The single flint from Field 2 was found close to the western margin.

The assemblage is comprised entirely of tools, which would suggest that there was earlier prehistoric activity in the vicinity. There were no waste-flakes, cores or other debitage, which shows that flint-working was taking place elsewhere.

There are no pieces diagnostic of date in this small assemblage. Although the possible sickle, or utilised blade may be more typical of an earlier Neolithic tool kit, it is not exclusively so, and the technology of its manufacture is no different from that of other flakes in the assemblage. The irregular scraper and other utilised flakes are more typical of the later Neolithic/early Bronze Age periods.

There is no indication that any of the flint was imported. Instead, the raw material used was a combination of local, naturally occurring surface chalk-land flint and gravel pebbles. Details of the flints are presented in Appendix 1.

5.3 The Pottery

by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised eight sherds with a total weight of 181g. All were post-medieval and comprised fabrics which are well known in the region. They were as follows:

Red Earthenwares, 16th century +. 5 sherds, 99g. Fine sandy earthenware, usually with a brown or green glaze, occurring in a range of utilitarian forms. Such 'country pottery' was first made in the 16th century, and in some areas continued in use until the 19th century. Numerous kiln sites are known, such as Fulmodeston (Wade-Martins 1983).

Black-glazed Earthenware, c late 17th-19th centuries. 1 sherd, 58g. Fabric similar to Red Earthenware ware, with a black, iron-rich, internal glaze.

Slipware, 17th century. 2 sherds, 24g. Fine sandy fabric very similar to Red Earthenware. Both sherds from this site had a thick white slip coated with a clear glaze giving a pale yellow colour on the inner surface.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds by fabric type is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds (g) per transect by fabric type

Field	Transit	Red E'wares		Black-glaze		Slipware	
		No	Weight	No	Weight	No	Weight
2	5	1	6				
2	5	1	51				
2	8	1	27				
1	14					1	17
1	14	1	110			1	7
1	15			1	58		
1	15	1	5				
Totals		5	99	1	58	2	24

5.4 Ceramic Building Material

by Tora Hylton

A small quantity of ceramic building material comprising 60 individual fragments was recovered. The majority were loosely scattered in Field 1 (44 pieces) while sixteen were from Field 2. The group comprises 53 pieces of tile and seven amorphous fragments of brick. Most of the tile are abraded fragments of post-medieval roof tile in a hard-fired dark orange sandy fabric. There are five small undiagnostic fragments which are pale orange in colour with a coarse sandy fabric and these may well be slightly earlier in date.

5.5 Metalwork

by Tora Hylton

The only significant object found was a broken copper-alloy fitting of probable post-medieval date found in the south-east quadrant of Field 1. It resembles a key with a 25mm stem protruding from a heart-shaped head. The lower part of the head has a single perforation surmounted on one side by a pair of inscribed horizontal lines.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 General

Considered in isolation, the small assemblage of finds does little to elucidate the archaeological potential of the PDA. There were no significant concentrations of material to infer settlement or, other than the ubiquitous post-medieval brick and tile, spreads of material to indicate land use in antiquity.

The results are similar, but not identical, to those of the *Hales, Loddon and Heckingham Survey* of 1985-6 (Havercroft 2001, Section 5.2 & 7.3). This survey recovered small quantities of material which, when considered in tandem with the recent results, allow certain general observations to be made. The results of the Hales Survey are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of The Hales, Loddon and Heckingham Survey

NSMR No	Location (TM)	Flint	Pottery			Tile/Brick
			Roman	Medieval	Post-medieval	
22659	3996 0034	0	0	1	1	noted
22673	397 990	2	0	6	5	0
22675	3975 9920	2	0	3	7	0
22693	3975 9950	6	4 + 3?	18	7	1 medieval

It should be noted that the Hales Survey covered only those areas of the PDA within the parish of Heckingham (Fig 3). These can be summarised as follows; the western part of Field 1 up to the parish boundary (NSMR 22695); the southern extreme and south-west of Field 1 (NSMR 22693); Field 2, omitting its southern extremity (NSMR 22675); and the remainder of Field 2 (NSMR 22673).

6.2 Prehistoric

Neither of the projects produced evidence for Palaeolithic or Mesolithic activity. The light scatter of Neolithic flint found during the present project differs slightly from the assemblages retrieved during the Hales Survey in that it was composed entirely of tools, although two were flakes showing only light retouch. The 'Hales' flints were a mix of unworked flakes (6) scrapers (2) and retouched flakes (2). Those from the recent survey were not closely grouped although three could be loosely attributed to the south-east sector of the north field. Even when combined, the assemblages from both surveys are not necessarily suggestive of occupation within the PDA. Sherds of prehistoric pottery, or other possible indicators of occupation such as heat-cracked stones, were not recovered.

6.3 Romano-British

The fieldwork did not produce finds of this period to add to the handful of Roman pottery sherds resulting from the Hales Survey (NSMR 22693). Based upon this evidence alone it would seem that the PDA was not extensively settled during the Romano-British period and little can be said about the nature of land use at this time. However, it should be noted that with small assemblages, such as this one, even limited amounts can be indicative of a site.

6.4 Early – Mid Saxon

As with the Hales Survey, there were no finds.

6.5 Late Saxon and early medieval

Nothing was found to add to the single sherd of possible early medieval pottery found by the Hales Survey (NSMR 22693).

6.6 Medieval

Again, nothing was found to add to the findings of the Hales Survey which produced a small assemblage of medieval pottery sherds from locations across the PDA (NSMR 22659, 22673, 22675, 22693). Based on these results, medieval occupation within the PDA would seem highly unlikely. All the finds are probably derived from manuring arable fields.

6.7 Later medieval and post-medieval

Post-medieval roof tile was dispersed across the PDA with small clusters present to the west of both fields and in the north-west of Field 1. A small group of post-medieval pottery, comprising five sherds, was also located in the north-west sector of Field 1 and may represent domestic waste from nearby Hill House. The Hales Survey also produced single sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery from this area (NSMR 22659). In addition it noted 'modern material in evidence near Hill House mainly brick and tile' (Havercroft 2001, 13). The copper-alloy fitting was found in the south-east sector of the same field. In general terms the post-medieval material can probably be attributed to manuring scatters. More was present at the west side of the site – perhaps no coincidence as this area is at the foot of the naturally sloping ground.

7 CONCLUSION

There is no indication of archaeological constraint within the PDA from the evidence of the surface finds. The conditions for fieldwalking were good, therefore the results of the survey are considered to be reliable.

It is possible, however, that there are buried archaeological remains present which have left no visible trace on the ground surface.

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APPENDIX 1

Flint data

by Alex Thorne

Field 1 Transect 2

Retouched and utilised blade. One concave edge has been extensively retouched along a 32mm length, and shows heavy edge-wear damage. The opposing sides are thick and only a small area shows some minor retouch. The slightly crescentic shape of the piece suggests that it could have been used as a sickle blade, and, although it lacks any gloss from repeated use, the adjacent ridge of a negative flake scar on the dorsal side is slightly abraded. An alternate use for the piece is as a wide 'spoke-shave'. It was a secondary blade, hard-hammer struck from a nodule of glossy, pale grey/brown translucent flint with dark grey/brown areas. It does not have any surface cortex, but traces of a thick grey/white patina exist. Surface chalkland flint. Length: 53mm, Breadth: 20mm, Thickness: 7mm.

Field 1 Transect 5

Side and end scraper. Small triangular-shaped piece with one side showing deeply flaked retouch, and only minor work to the end. The bulbar end has been removed. The piece has some edge-wear damage to the side. Made from a secondary flake from a nodule of dark grey/brown glossy flint, which retains a very small area of a thin brown speckly patina or cortex, indicative of a small gravel nodule. L: 36mm, B: 25mm, T: 9mm.

Field 1 Transect 6

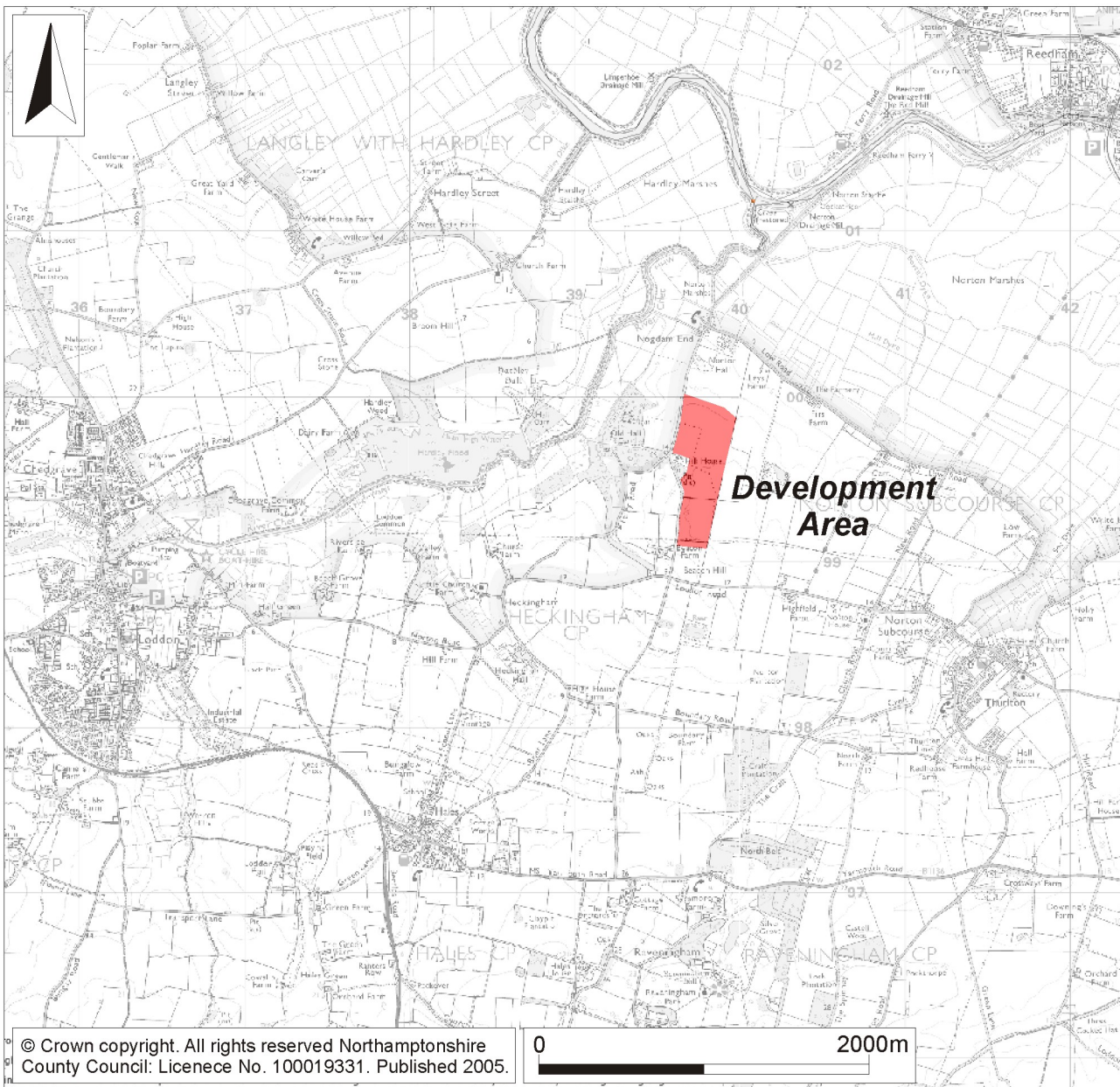
Utilised flake. Small flake showing edge-wear damage to both sides and a small amount of associated retouch to one part. Primary flake with hinged fracture, probably hard-hammer struck from a nodule of dark grey/brown glossy flint with occasional rough, grey cherty inclusions. It has a matt patina with some bluish/grey to white speckling and a thin rough creamy/white cortex which is brown stained. Surface chalk-land flint. L: 18mm, B: 24mm, T: 4mm.

Field 1 Transect 11

Utilised flake. Both sides and the broken distal end show extensive edge wear damage so that they are uneven. Hard-hammer struck tertiary flake of pale grey/brown translucent glossy flint. L: 29mm, B: 27mm, T: 6mm.

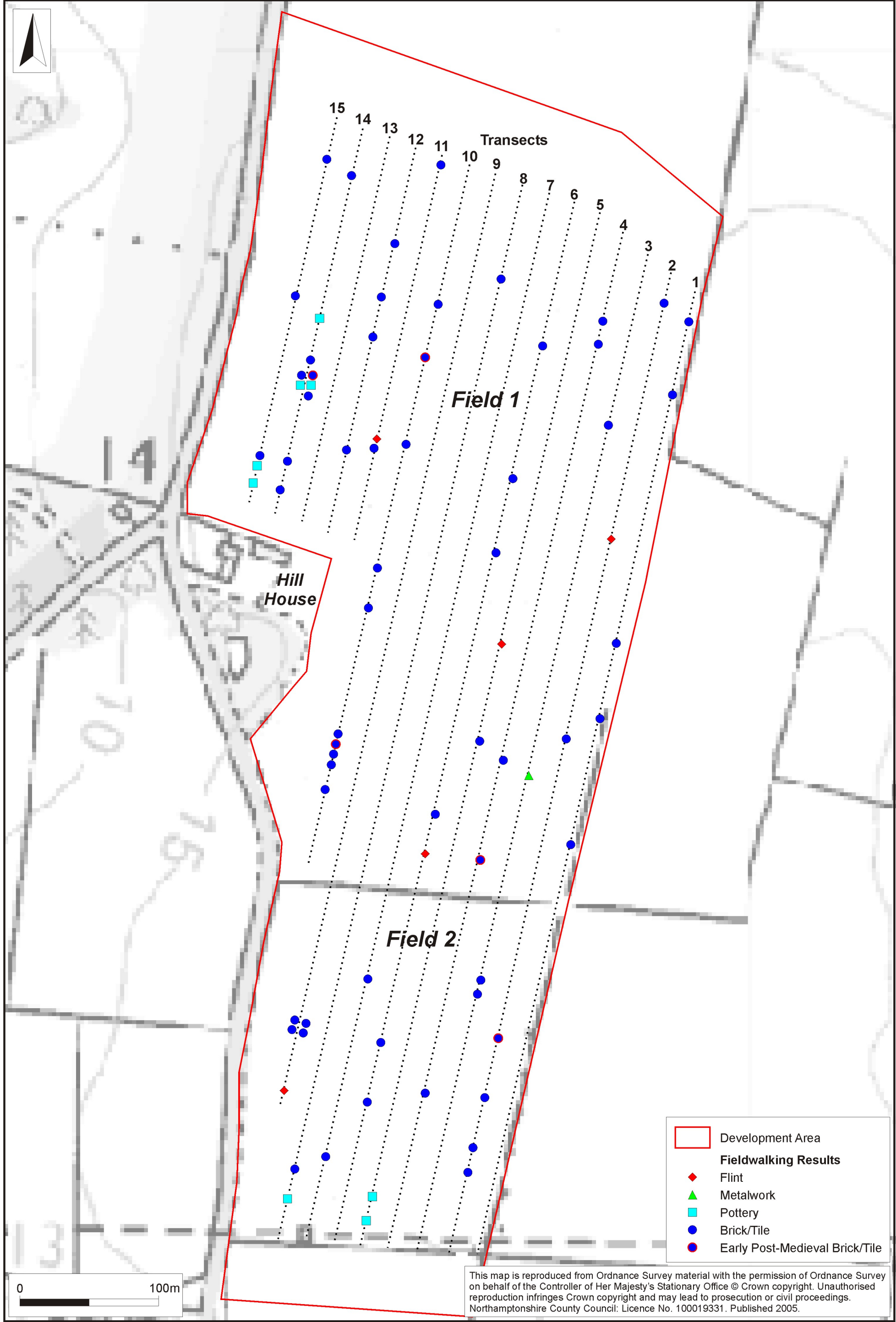
Field 2 Transect 9

Notched and utilised flake. The end shows extensive rework and/or damage including a 12mm by 1.5mm notch. Primary flake, hard-hammer struck from an irregular smoothed nodule of river, beach or glacial gravel, with a thin brown speckly patina and traces of cortex, some of which shows extensive percussion marks from water/glacial action. It has some rough, grey cherty inclusions. Same as that from Transect 5. L: 44, B: 47mm, T: 13mm



Scale 1:40,000

Fig. 1



Hill House

Field 1

Field 2

Transects



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Scale 1:2500

Fig. 2





NSMR22659

NSMR22693

NSMR22675

NSMR22673

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Scale 1:2500

Fig. 3

