



**Northamptonshire  
County Council**

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# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Watching Brief on the  
Compound for the Anglian Water Sewage Scheme  
Tansor and Cotterstock S101A  
Northamptonshire February 2005



March 2005

Report no. 05/38

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**Northamptonshire Archaeology**

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## OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project title	Anglian Water Sewage Scheme S101A (Tansor and Cotterstock, Northamptonshire)	
Short description	<p>A watching brief Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of Anglian Water was maintained during the removal of topsoil in the footprint of the works compound in field 8 at Tansor in February 2005. Only the base of 4 possible medieval/post-medieval furrows were present in the surface of the subsoil. Two sherds of Iron Age pottery, ten sherds of medieval pottery, two iron objects and eight worked flints were recovered from subsoil. The large possible ring ditch recorded in the geophysical survey was not exposed and remains undisturbed below subsoil.</p>	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment, fieldwalking and geophysical survey 2004; Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Future work	Yes: evaluation and or watching brief	
Monument type and period		
Significant finds		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Tansor, Northamptonshire	
Easting	405350	
Northing	296950	
Height OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council, Historic Environment Team	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Alex Thorne	
Project Manager	Steve Parry assisted by Adam Yates and Anthony Maull	
Sponsor or funding body	Anglian Water Ltd	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	February 2005	
End date	February 2005	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical		Pottery flint and iron objects.
Paper		Site data. Photographic record
Digital		
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
	NA report	
Title		
Serial title & volume		
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

## CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY FOR THE WATCHING BRIEF</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>WATCHING BRIEF ON THE COMPOUND</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>THE FINDS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>4</b>

### TABLES

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds by fabric type

### FIGURES

Fig 1 Site Location, scale 1:12,500

Fig 2 Watching brief results overlaid on the geophysical survey plot, scale 1: 500

### PLATES

Frontispiece View of compound after the removal of topsoil, looking south-west, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
February 2005

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON THE COMPOUND FOR THE  
ANGLIAN WATER SEWAGE SCHEME TANSOR AND COTTERSTOCK S101A  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, FEBRUARY 2005**

*Abstract*

*A watching brief by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of Anglian Water, was maintained during the removal of topsoil in the footprint of the works compound in field 8 at Tansor in February 2005. Only the base of four possible medieval/post-medieval furrows were present in the surface of the subsoil. Two sherds of Iron Age pottery, ten sherds of medieval pottery, two iron objects and eight worked flints were recovered from subsoil. The large ring ditch recorded in the geophysical survey was not exposed and remains undisturbed below subsoil.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

A scheme for the provision of a new sewage disposal system for the Northamptonshire villages of Tansor and Cotterstock by Anglian Water is underway (centered on NGR: TL 0525 9065; Fig 1). The Tansor and Cotterstock Scheme S101A will insert new sewers beneath each of the villages' principal roads, one within Cotterstock and two within Tansor. New pipelines in open countryside between the villages will link the sewers to pumping stations and sewage treatment works. The proposed scheme covers an approximate distance of 3.5km. The first stage of the works comprised the installation of a works compound in field 8 to the immediate south of Tansor village.

**2 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

A programme of archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of the scheme in 2004, comprising a desk-based assessment (Thorne 2004) followed with geophysical and walkover surveys carried out in the fields directly affected by the scheme.

In field 8 at Tansor, a hitherto unknown circular feature, on a slightly raised area of land, together with other anomalies were found in the geophysical survey (Butler and Fisher 2004). This was unrelated to aerial photographic features recorded in the NCC SMR (site 2647/0/0).

Subsequent fieldwalking recovered a single sherd of Romano-British pottery, occasional sherds of early-middle Saxon pottery and concentrations of medieval pottery from most of the field (Holmes 2004). A slightly higher concentration of worked flint present towards the southern end of the field could suggest a prehistoric date for the circular feature, which may be a ring ditch.

The predominant geological formations underlying Tansor are second terrace river gravels. The area of land between the two villages is alluvium and first terrace gravel deposits.

In the light of the evaluation, it was required that a watching brief should be maintained during groundworks associated with the works compound (Flitcroft 2005).

The objectives of the watching brief were to record any archaeological deposits which were affected by the subsoil strip.

### **3 METHODOLOGY FOR THE WATCHING BRIEF**

A watching brief was maintained during the removal of topsoil at the entrance to, and within the compound area within field 8. All features in the surface of the subsoil were recorded along with the depths of topsoil removed. A full written record of the works was maintained on standard pro-forma Northamptonshire Archaeology watching brief forms. A plan of the works was made at a scale of 1:500, related to the national grid. The position of all finds made within the surface of the subsoil was plotted. A full photographic record was maintained in both colour slide and monochrome print formats. All finds were collected including those noted on spoil heaps.

### **4 WATCHING BRIEF ON THE COMPOUND (Fig 2)**

A watching brief was carried out on the 31<sup>st</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> February 2005. Topsoil was removed in the imprint of the compound and from the verge at a new entrance through the hedge in the south-west corner of field 8 (Fig 2) by a 360° tracked machine fitted with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. At the entrance, a section of circular concrete pipe was added in the stream channel after the removal of some of the surrounding silty clay. The clay contained occasional large pieces of pantile. Topsoil at the entrance was 450mm deep.

Topsoil varying from 250mm to 500mm across the compound area, was removed to achieve a uniform, flat surface. The underlying subsoil was a brown silty clay with occasional gravel, possibly alluvial in origin. The natural ground surface was not exposed. Remnants of four parallel linear features comprising up to 20mm of remnant topsoil were present within the surface of the subsoil towards the north-east side of the compound area (Fig 2: A). These features probably represent the base of medieval/post-medieval furrows, and correspond with faint geophysical anomalies. A larger and irregular spread of silt at the south-east corner of the compound probably represents a slight natural hollow in the subsoil (Fig 2: B). Part of a semi-circular spread of clay was present at the south-east side of the compound, possibly a superficial dump which originated from the clearing of the nearby stream channel alongside the field (Fig 2: C).

There was no indication of the large circular, possible ring ditch feature nor the adjacent parallel features identified by the geophysical survey in the subsoil, which suggests that they are sealed by the subsoil. Several sherds of medieval pottery and an iron object were recovered from inside the circuit of the enclosure. Several other finds of pottery – two Iron Age, and the remainder medieval, as well as worked flints and iron were made from the remainder of the area and from spoil. None of the objects confirms the date of the ring ditch, which is presumed to be prehistoric.

The subsoil was subsequently covered with terram and hardcore. The topsoil will be re-instated after the removal of the hardcore.

## 5 THE FINDS

### **The Pottery** by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprises 13 sherds with a total weight of 105g. Two of the sherds are of Iron Age date, the rest medieval. The entire assemblage was unstratified.

#### *Fabric*

The medieval pottery was quantified using the chronology and coding system of the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (CTS), as follows:

F330: Shelly Coarseware, AD1100-1400. 9 sherds, 35g.

F320: Lyveden/Stanion 'B' ware, AD1225-1400. 1 sherd, 40g.

F404: Cistercian ware, AD1470-1550. 1 sherd, 3g.

*Discussion*

The whole assemblage occurred in the subsoil and thus is unstratified. All the sherds are abraded to a greater or lesser degree, and the calcareous inclusions in the shelly wares have dissolved, leaving only voids. The two sherds of Iron Age pottery have a fine sandy fabric with moderate to dense, fine quartz less than 0.5mm and rare shell fragments. Like the medieval wares, they are very abraded, and are both plain bodysherds without any chronologically diagnostic features.

The range of fabric types suggests that there was activity at the site in the earlier part of the medieval period, but, one small sherd aside, no pottery was deposited after the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds by fabric type is shown in Table 1.

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds by fabric type*

Pot no	IA		F330		F320		F404	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
spoil			4	19			1	3
1			1	10				
4	1	20						
5			1	2				
7			1	1				
8	1	7						
9			1	2				
10					1	40		
12			1	1				
Total	2	27	9	35	1	40	1	3

**The Iron Objects** by Tora Hylton

Two iron objects were recovered from subsoil deposits; both are heavily encrusted in ferrous sand grains and corrosion products, making identification difficult. The finds are fragmentary and comprise a fragment of an iron nail and a possible knife blade. The latter identification will be confirmed by X-ray.



*Finds catalogue*

- SF1 Nail, iron. Incomplete, terminal of shank missing. Encrusted in corrosion products, so shape of head difficult to determine. Length (incomplete): 30mm  
Field 8, Context 01
- SF 2 Two joining objects, iron. Nature of objects difficult to determine as heavily encrusted in sand grains and corrosion products. Broken section of objects reveals a triangular cross-section, perhaps suggesting that the object may be a fragment of a knife blade. The object will need to be x-rayed to confirm this.  
Total dimensions: 67 x 45mm Width: 32mm Th: 6mm  
Field 8, Context 01

**The Flint** by Alex Thorne

Two worked flints were recovered from the surface of subsoil and a further six from spoil. There are no diagnostic pieces, and the assemblage may date from the earlier Neolithic or later periods. Two side and end scrapers were on wide flakes (from cores from which thin blades had previously been removed), and both had been heavily used. Of the five examples of retouched and utilised flakes and blades, only one had small areas of use-damage or retouched edges. One also had a large flaked notch. Only a single small waste flake was present to suggest that flint working was taking place as well as subsistence activities.

Two of the flints retained areas of thin brown cortex which suggests that the local gravel was used as the raw material. The flint was variously patinated white, mottled blue-grey with the exception of one piece which was unpatinated.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The possible ring ditch in field 8 at Tansor was not revealed in the watching brief on the removal of topsoil from the compound as it would be sealed by subsoil. Unstratified finds recovered from subsoil mainly comprise medieval pottery from manuring of the fields, although two Iron Age sherds were present. Flints were also recovered, although it is not certain whether they may be contemporary with the ring ditch which is presumed to be prehistoric in date.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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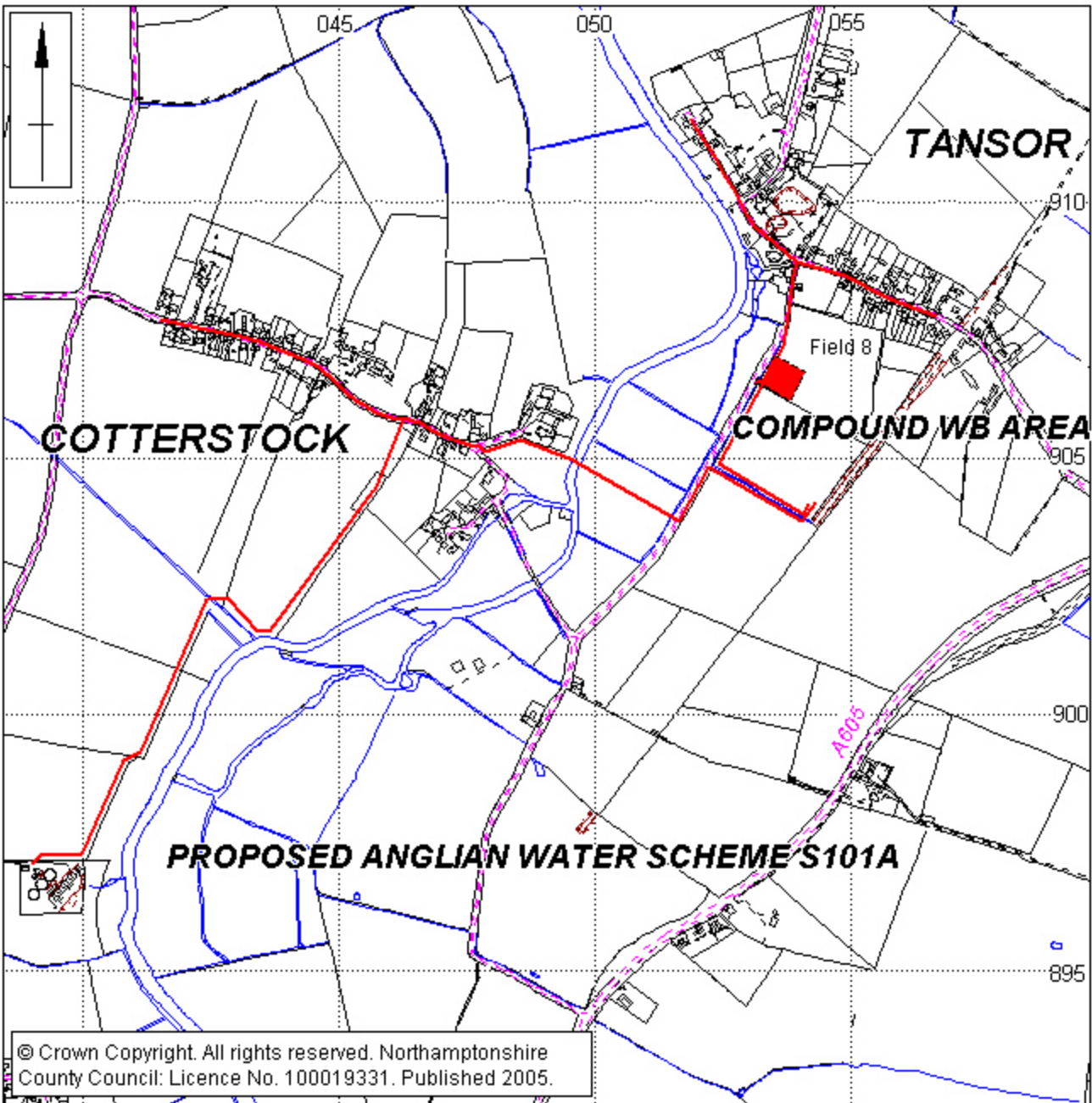
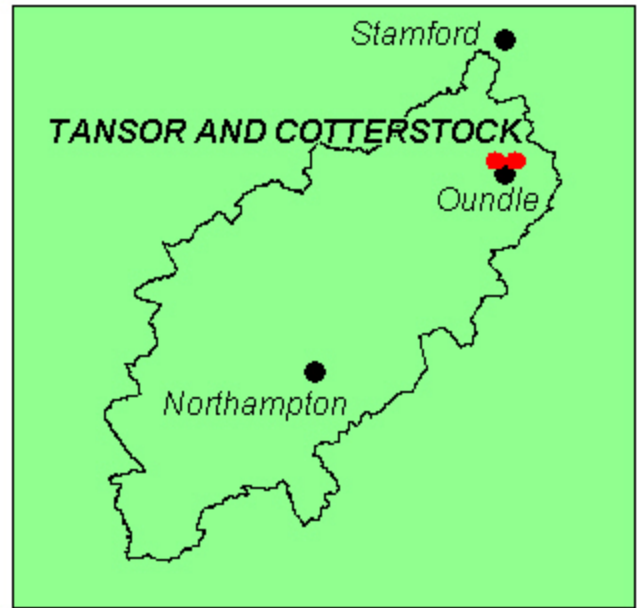
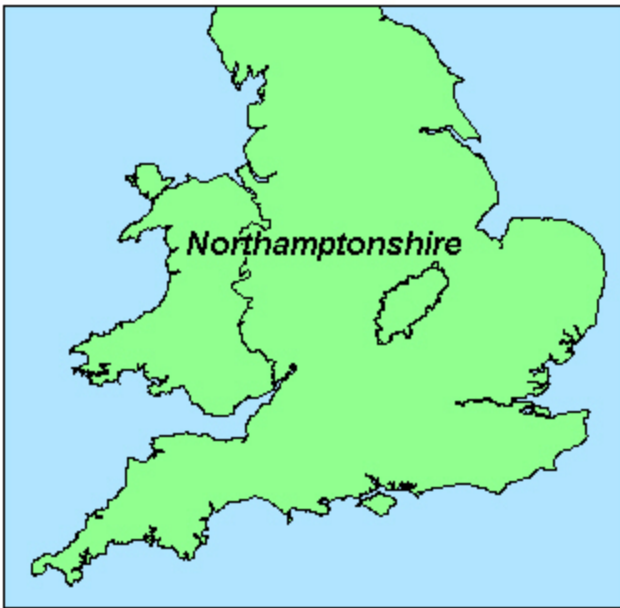
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7<sup>th</sup> March, 2005



Scale 1:12,500

Fig. 1

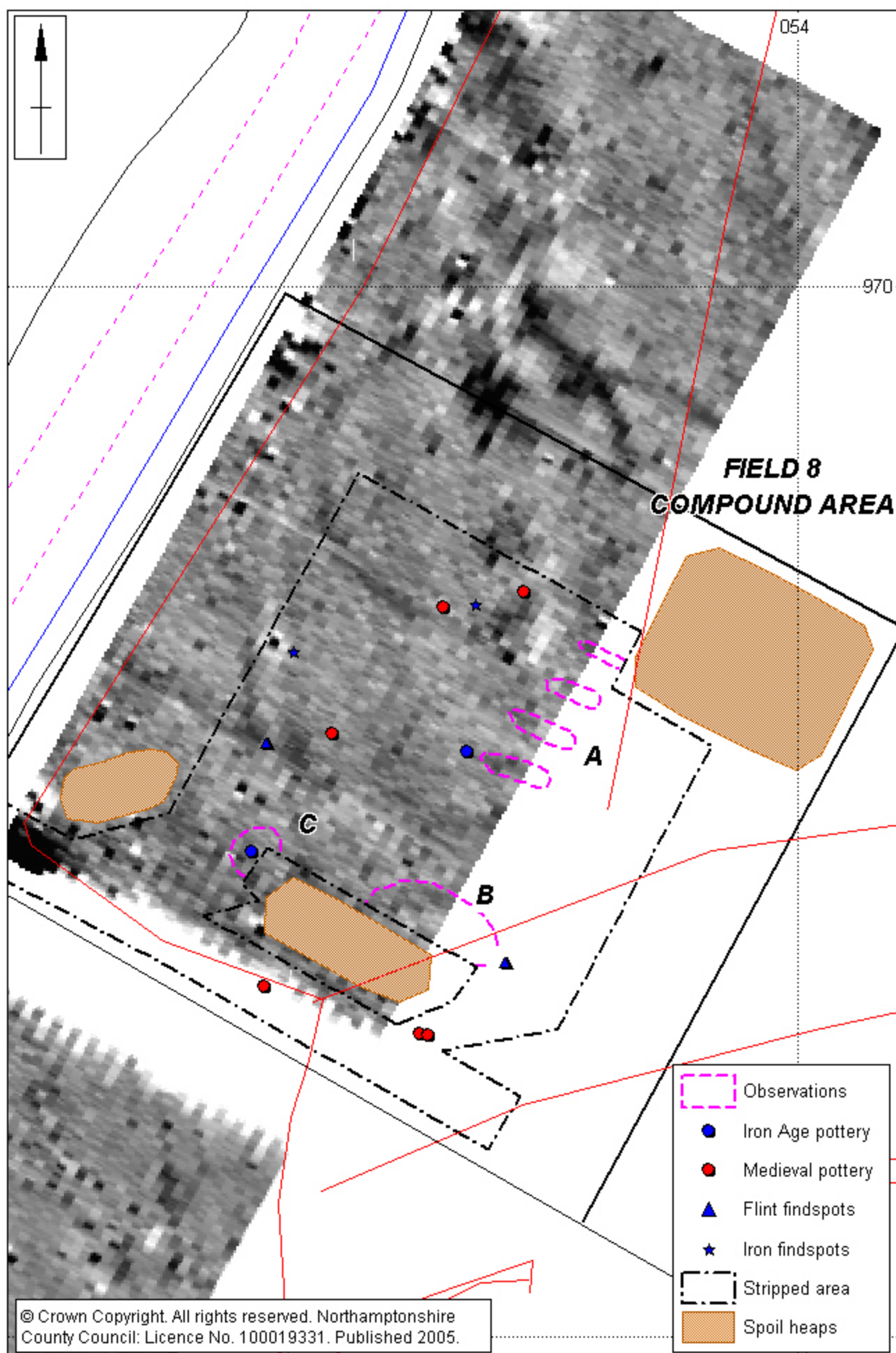


Fig. 2