Northamptonshire Archaeology

Palaeochannel deposits at Ashlyn, Kiln Lane, Welton Northamptonshire

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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***OASIS* REPORT FORM**

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Palaeochannel deposits at Ashlyn, Kiln Lane, Welton, Northamptonshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Archaeological trial excavations by Northamptonshire Archaeology examined two trenches within the former garden of Ashlyn, Kiln Lane, Welton, Northamptonshire. The trenches revealed palaeochannel deposits filling hollows carved by a former watercourse of unknown date. The deposits produced a small quantity of animal bone.	
Project type	Trial excavations	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Garden	
Future work	No	
Monument / period	Undated palaeochannels	
Significant finds	Animal bone	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Ashlyn, Kiln Lane, Welton, Northamptonshire, NN11 5JN	
Study area	Two trenches, 10m long by 2m wide	
OS location	SP 5836 6566	
Height OD	*c*112m above Ordnance Datum	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Elisabeth Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Adam Yates, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor	Mrs J Turland, Mrs R Pimlett & Mr G Pimlett	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	October 2010	
End date	October 2010	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no)**	**Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)**
Physical		Animal bone
Paper		Site excavation record, photographic record & background documentation
Digital		Final report PDF
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report	
Title	Palaeochannel deposits at Ashlyn, Kiln Lane, Welton, Northamptonshire	
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology report 10/194	
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PALAEOCHANNEL DEPOSITS AT
ASHLYN, KILN LANE, WELTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

November 2010

Abstract

Archaeological trial excavations by Northamptonshire Archaeology examined two trenches within the former garden of Ashlyn, Kiln Lane, Welton, Northamptonshire. The trenches revealed palaeochannel deposits filling hollows carved by a former watercourse of unknown date. The deposits produced a small quantity of animal bone.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook archaeological trial trench excavation for J Turland, R Pimlett & G Pimlett at Ashlyn, Kiln Lane, Welton, Northamptonshire (Fig 1; SP 5836 6566). Work was undertaken following a specification produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology to meet the requirements of the planning authority brief (Yates 2010; Mordue 2010). The Assistant County Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council Planning, visited the site and approved the work during its undertaking.

2 BACKGROUND

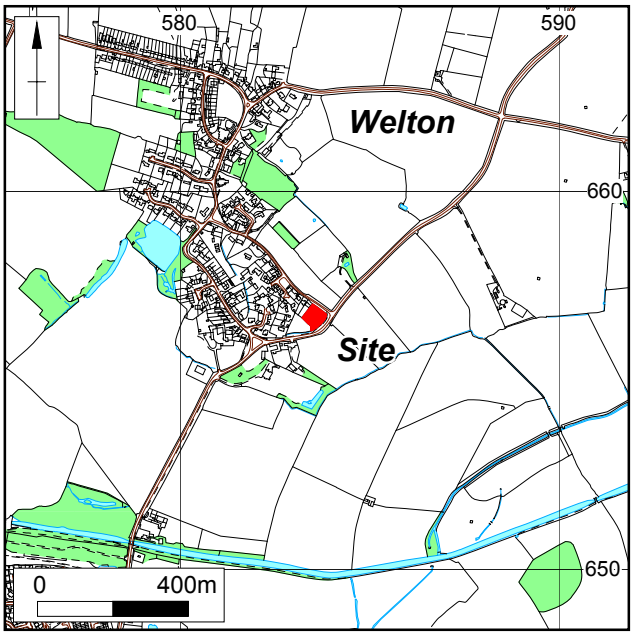
2.1 Archaeological background

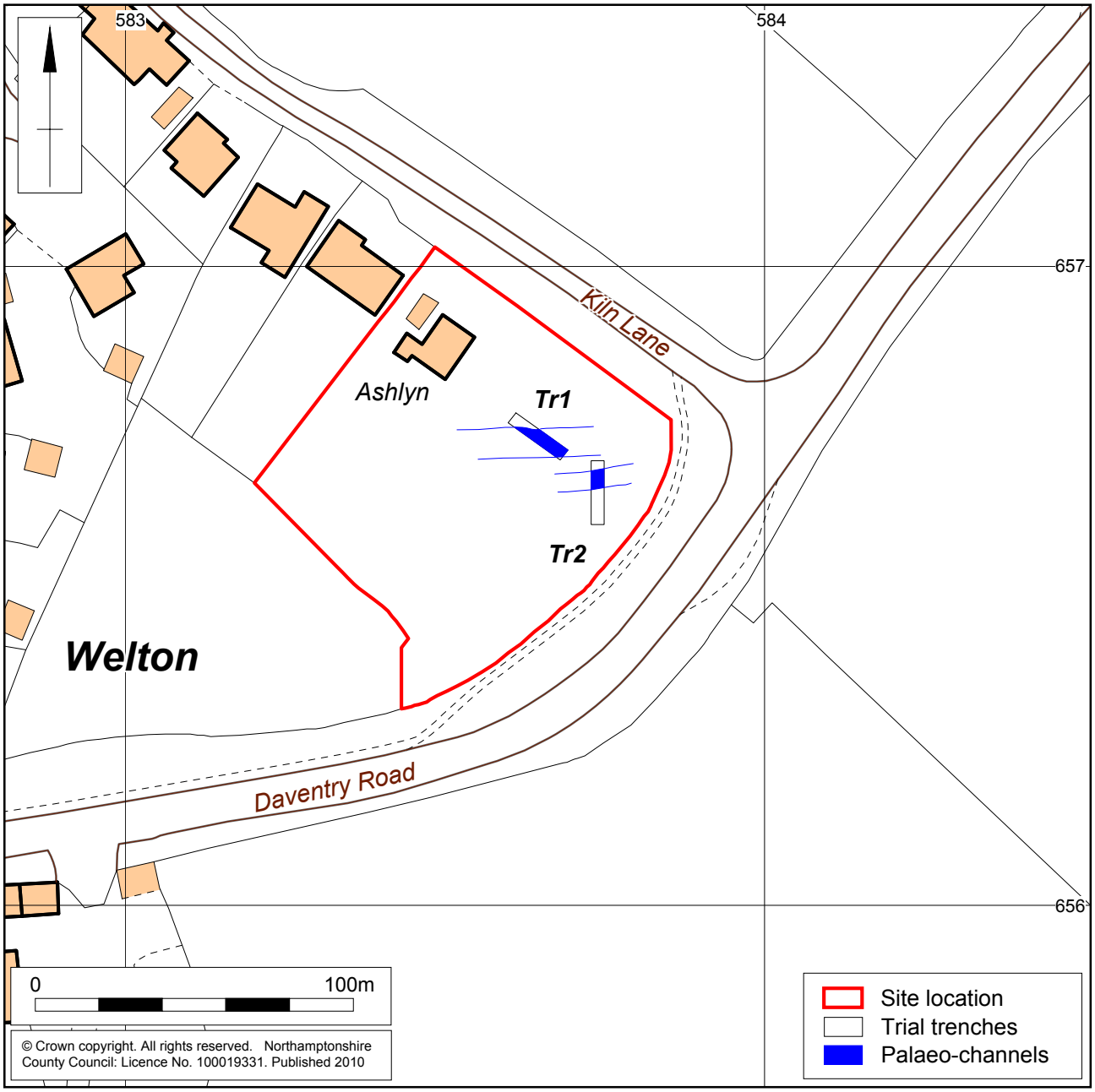
It was the opinion of the County Archaeological Advisors that unrecorded archaeological remains relating to the early settlement of Welton may survive within the site. No previous archaeological work has taken place within the proposed development area.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted for known archaeological remains within 250m radius of the site (Fig 2). On the south side of Daventry Road are extensive earthworks which are believed to be the remains of the medieval settlement (HER619). The layout and extent of the original settlement is not known and only these surviving features give an indication of what may have been a wider distribution beyond the limits of the modern pasture. The features represent a network of boundaries, ditches, possible hollow-ways, tofts and possible house platforms that would have served the medieval community (HER619/0/2-7). The earthworks are truncated by a probable modern water channel (HER9518/0/1).

At the south-west end of the medieval settlement is an area of ground believed to have been parkland during the late medieval period, and probably in use well into the post-medieval period (HER6855). Within the former parkland are further earthworks, part of the wider layout. Welton Manor is a post-medieval Listed Building, formerly called Churchill House, which was built in the 18th century and extended in the 19th century (HER619/3/1). Its grounds contain an ornamental pond that might be the relict of a medieval fish pond. The parkland has since been developed with more recent buildings, although the larger part remains garden.

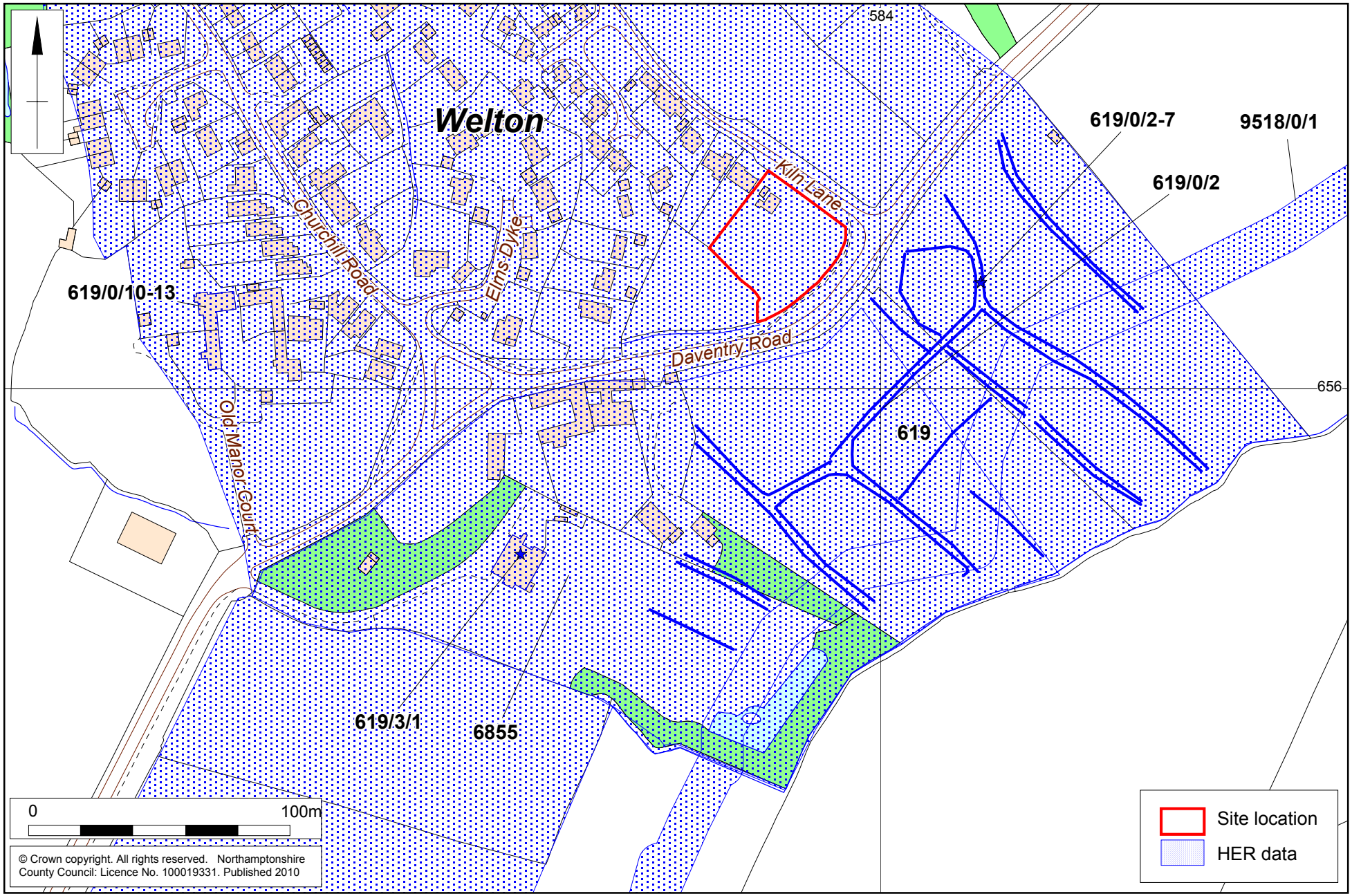
On the opposite side of the road, the Manor House carries a date stone inscribed ‘1650 EA 1667’ and is a 17th-century Listed Building with 18th to 19th-century alterations (HER619/0/10-13). It indicates that the functions of the manor must have extended north of Daventry Road but since much of this ground is now built upon its historical and archaeological significance is currently unknown.





Scale 1:1,000

Site location and trench plan Fig 1



Historic Environment Record (HER) data Fig 2

2.2 Topography and geology

The site is on the east side of Welton, Northamptonshire. The front of the site faces north-east onto Kiln Lane and to the east and south is the bend of the Watford to Daventry Road. To the rear of the site, its south-west side is bounded by an open grassed field. The private residence of Orchard View is located on the north-west boundary. The site lies at *c*112m above Ordnance Datum.

The village of Welton is located on the slopes of the Upper Nene Valley, close to the watershed. The underlying geology is Lower and Middle Lias Clay (BGS 2001). Light yellowish-grey and greyish-blue natural clay was observed during trial excavations. The soil belongs to the Wickham 2 soil association derived from drift over Juassic and Cretaceous clay and comprising slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy, and fine silty, over clayey soils (LAT 1983).

3 TRIAL EXCAVATION STRATEGY

3.1 Objectives

It was the overall aim of the trial excavation to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any archaeological remains within their cultural and environmental setting. In specific the following objectives were defined:

- determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits
- recover any artefacts that may assist in development of a regional type-series
- recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions, if appropriate.

3.2 Methodology

Two archaeological trial trenches, 10m long by 2m wide, were excavated within the proposed footprints of the future building development. The locations were recorded in relation to the Ordnance Survey using measurements to fixed points along field boundaries and buildings.

The topsoil and subsoil was removed under archaeological supervision by mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, to reveal significant archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the natural substrate. Archaeological deposits were cleaned and examined sufficiently to characterise, record and date their nature and extent. A collection of artefacts was retained for analysis.

Digital photographs were taken, supplemented with 35mm monochrome negatives, and colour transparencies for archive purposes. The photographic record is accompanied by *pro forma* trial trench record sheets that contain detailed information on the archaeological deposits encountered. All photographs and paper archive records have been compiled in accordance with recognised museum practise (Walker 1990, IfA 2008).

Northamptonshire Archaeology is an Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) registered organisation (RAO48). All work was undertaken in accordance with current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010), *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008), the procedural documents of English Heritage (EH 1991; 2002; 2006).

The potential for viable palaeo-environmental samples was discussed on site with the attendant monitoring officer and, given the generally sterile nature of the fill, it was agreed that no additional sampling would be required at this time.

4 RESULTS

All contexts are listed in Table 1, below. Both trenches were overlain by the same subsoil and garden topsoil. The subsoil comprised a layer of firm mid-brown slightly sandy clay (102/202) that was 240mm thick, containing occasional pebbles and flint, <20mm in size. The topsoil was friable dark greyish-brown clayey loam (101/201) that was 240mm thick.

Table 1: Context index

Context	Type	Description	Maximum thickness/depth (mm)	Relationships
Trench 1				
101	topsoil	friable dark greyish-brown clayey loam	240	overlies 102
102	subsoil	firm mid-brown slightly sandy clay, occasional pebbles and flint, <20mm size	240	overlies 103
103	fill of 105	firm light greyish-brown silty clay with moderate gravel, <20mm size	400	overlies 104
104	fill of 105	firm mottled mid- bluish-grey silty clay with orange-brown flecks and infrequent gravels, <10mm size, animal bone	640	overlies 106
105	palaeochannel	broad shallow natural channel with uneven sides and base	760	cuts 106
106	natural	Lower/Middle Lias Clay		
Trench 2				
201	topsoil	friable dark greyish-brown clayey loam	330	overlies 202
202	subsoil	firm mid-brown slightly sandy clay, occasional pebbles and flint, <20mm size	240	overlies 203
203	fill of 204	firm light mottled bluish-grey and brown flecked silty clay with occasional small grit, <10mm size, animal bone	380	overlies 205
204	palaeochannel	broad shallow natural channel with uneven sides and base	380	cuts 205
205	natural	Lower/Middle Lias Clay		

4.1 Trench 1

The trench contained a palaeochannel [105], cut into the natural clay (Figs 2 and 3). The channel was over 8.7m wide and asymmetrical, its sides uneven and unpredictable in alignment, with a general trend lying on a west to east line. Run-off would have flowed east. The side sloped gradually and gently forming a broad feature with a shallow uneven base and a minor channel on its west side, typical of the braded channels of the Nene valley. It was 0.76m deep at its lowest point, with shallower parts of the channel sides at 0.40m deep. The lower fill comprised mottled mid- bluish-grey silty clay (104) with orange-brown flecks and infrequent gravels, <10mm size, which was up to 0.64m thick. Two pieces of

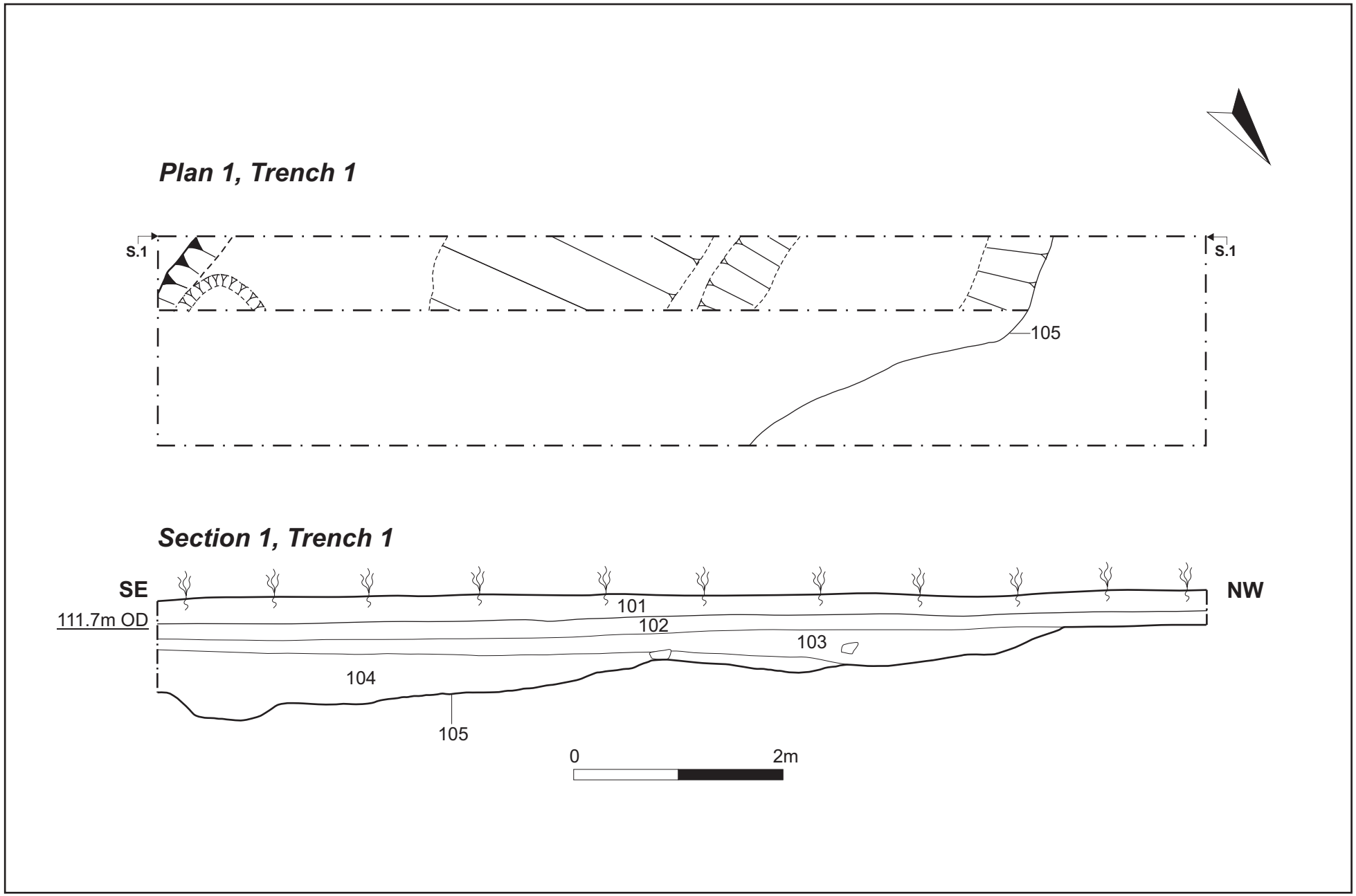
animal bone were recovered. The sediment merged gradually with the deposits above, and filled a spread over the shallower side channel, this comprised light greyish-brown silty clay (103) with moderate gravel up to 0.40m thick. Iron salts were present throughout both fills.

Palaeochannel [105], looking south-east Fig 3

4.2 Trench 2

Another palaeochannel [204] was discovered on a parallel west to east alignment (Fig 4). It is likely to have been part of the same watercourse, another shallow braided channel, of similar age to that excavated in Trench 1. This channel was 3.0m wide by 0.38m deep. It exhibited the same uneven, asymmetrical profile, which met with a fairly flat irregular base. The fill comprised light mottled bluish-grey and brown flecked silty clay (203) with occasional small grit, <10mm in size. Iron salts were present throughout. The sediment produced a small quantity of animal bone.

Palaeochannel [204], looking east Fig 4



Trench 1, plan and section Fig 5

5 ANIMAL BONE by Karen Deighton

A total of 1.5kg of animal bone was recovered from two palaeochannels during the course of excavation. The material was analysed to determine the species present, the level of preservation and the contribution to the understanding of the site.

The assemblage was examined using standard zooarchaeological methods according to current best practice (Schmidt 1972; Silver 1969; Halstead 1985; Levine 1982; Binford 1981).

Palaeochannel [105]

The channel deposit contained the right side of a cattle mandible with molars 2 and 3 present. The level of tooth wear indicates an elderly animal. Heavily fragmented splinters of horse tibia were also present.

Palaeochannel [204]

The channel deposit contained mandibular horse molars 1-3 and mandible fragments. Tooth wear indicates an animal of between five and twenty years. A tibia with distal epiphysis, a femur with distal epiphysis and fragments of a proximal humerus were also recovered. Epiphyseal fusion of the distal femur indicates an animal of over 3.5 years. The similar surface condition and consistent size of these bones suggests they could be from a single animal. Knife marks are present on the proximal femur and mid shaft of the tibia are consistent with skinning. Three large ungulate vertebra fragments were also present.

Discussion

A study of the bone assemblage contributes little to the understanding of the function or economy of the site beyond saying that cattle and horse were present at the time the palaeochannels were in use. This small assemblage consists largely of horse remains.

6 SUMMARY

The proposed development area is crossed from west to east by a former stream channel which bears all the characteristics typical of an Upper Nene Valley watercourse, shallow and braided. There are no man-made archaeological features within the footprint of the proposed buildings and no build-up deposits of antiquity. The excavation demonstrated that the features which are present are of entirely alluvial origin and did not show any signs of deliberate water management. A small quantity of animal bone may indicate the dumping of domestic waste from occupation nearby, but the lack of other finds suggests that this may not have been an intensely used area of ground when the stream was in existence. It is not possible to ascertain a date through scientific analysis of the bone collagen, which is believed to be in too poor a state of preservation.

The close proximity of earthworks in the neighbouring field relate to the medieval manor. Since medieval domestic waste is usually widespread on settlement sites this tends to suggest that the water channel predates medieval Welton and had ceased to exist by that time.

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