



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

## Archaeological metal detection survey and trial trench evaluation of land at Pavilion Drive, Northampton



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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project title	Archaeological metal detector survey and trial trench evaluation of land at Pavilion Drive, Northamptonshire, July 2010	
A rapid metal detector survey and archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Pavilion Drive, Northampton, was carried out in advance of the construction of a new Criminal Justice building. The metal detecting survey recovered five artefacts dating from the 16th to 20th centuries. The trial trench evaluation revealed a ditch which was undated and most probably the remains of a post-medieval field boundary. Made-ground was encountered in the south-west corner of the site, where a possible hard standing had been created for sectional buildings.		
Project type	Metal detector survey and trial trench evaluation	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment	
Current land use	Waste ground	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	Undated ditch	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Pavilion Drive, Northampton	
Easting Northing	SP 7645 5820	
Area (sq m/ha)	c1.0 hectare	
Height aOD	65.0m	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	SKM Enviros	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Anne Foard-Colby	
Project Manager	Tony Walsh	
Sponsor or funding body	Northamptonshire Police	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	21/07/2010	
End date	23/07/2010	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Contents</b>
Physical	NA store	One sherd of pottery
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)
Digital		Client report PDF
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Archaeological metal detector survey and trial trench evaluation of land at Pavilion Drive, Northamptonshire, July 2010	
Serial title & volume	10/122	
Author(s)	Anne Foard-Colby	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL METAL DETECTION SURVEY  
AND TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION OF LAND AT  
PAVILION DRIVE, NORTHAMPTON  
JULY 2010**

*Abstract*

*A rapid metal detector survey and archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Pavilion Drive, Northampton, was carried out in advance of the construction of a new Criminal Justice building. The metal detecting survey recovered five artefacts dating from the 16th to 20th centuries. The trial trench evaluation revealed a ditch which was undated and most probably the remains of a post-medieval field boundary. Made-ground was encountered in the south-west corner of the site, where a possible hard standing had been created for sectional buildings.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Archaeological evaluation comprising a rapid metal detector survey and archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) in July 2010 on land at Pavilion Drive, Northampton (NGR: SP 7645 5820; Fig 1).

The work was commissioned by SKM Enviros on behalf of Northamptonshire Police and was undertaken to fulfil the conditions of a grant of planning consent (planning application no.08/0283) for the erection of a new Criminal Justice Centre. The evaluation met the requirements of a brief issued by Northamptonshire County Council's Archaeological Advisor (Mather 2010) and detailed in the specification prepared by NA (NA 2010).

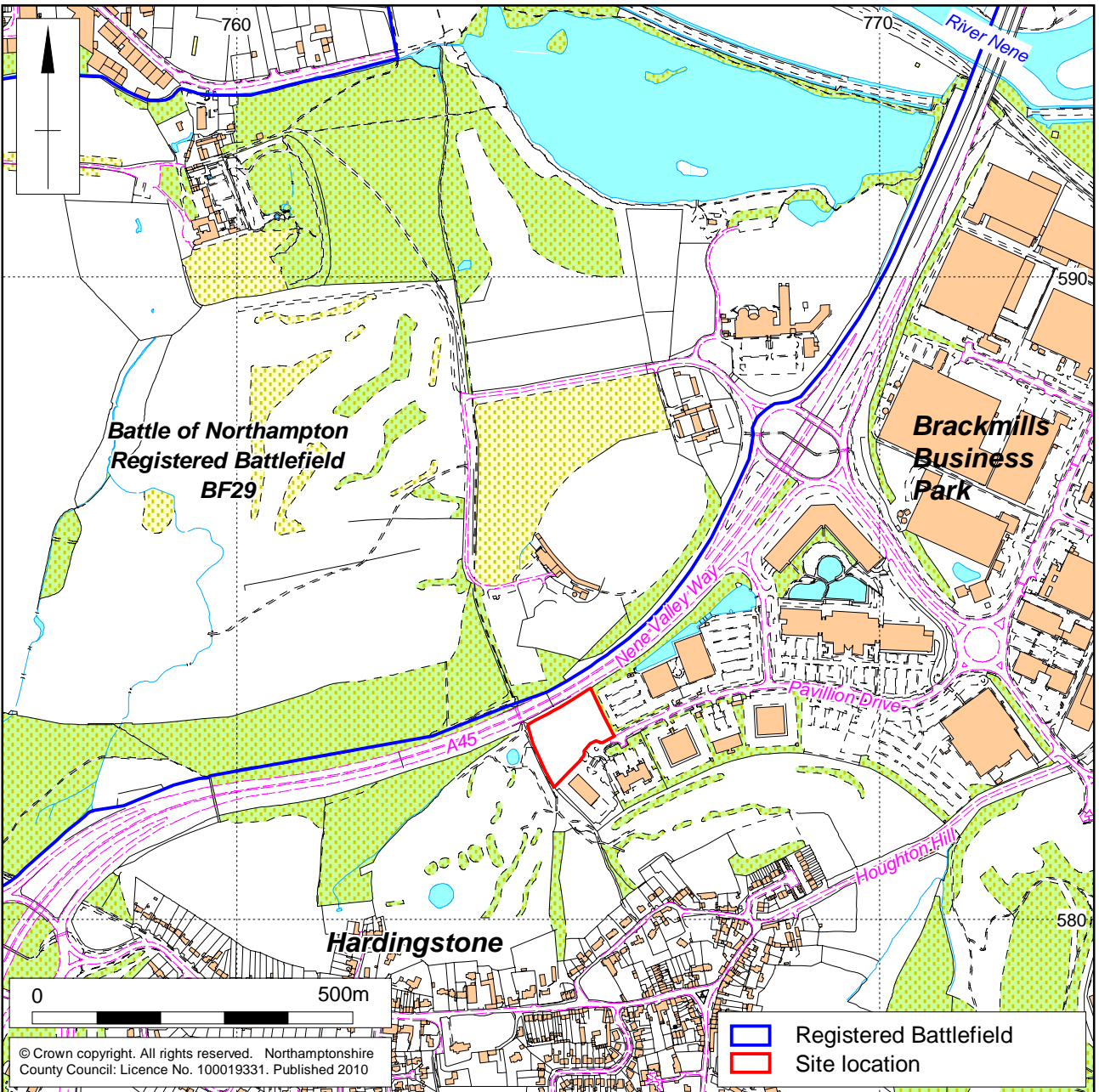
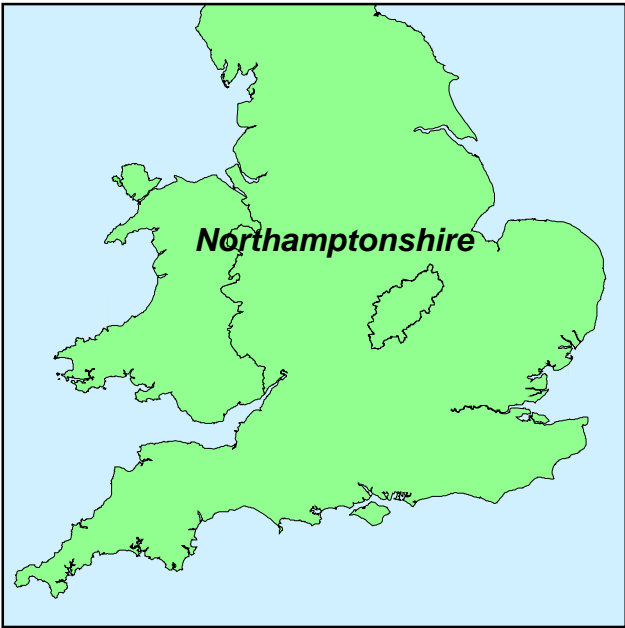
The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence of any archaeological features or deposits within the application area and to date and characterise their extent, depth of burial and state of preservation.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Topography and geology**

The development site, which covers an area of c1.0ha, is located on the south-eastern edge of Northampton, within the western edge of Brackmills Business Park. The site lies adjacent to the A45 Nene Valley Way and to the west of Pavilion Drive. It occupies a flat area of land on the lower slopes of the River Nene valley, at a height of c65m above Ordnance Datum. The plot is currently an open area of scrub and rough ground.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Lower Lias deposits overlain by glacial sand and gravels ([www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex)).



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

## 2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The following extract has been taken from the desk-based assessment by Charlotte Walker (Walker 2008).

The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted for documented sites and monuments within the proposed development area and a nominal 500m radius surrounding it, although the village of Hardingstone itself was excluded (Fig 2). The site has not been classified as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, nor is it included on the register of parks and gardens. The southern boundary of the Registered Battlefield of the Battle of Northampton lies on the opposite side of the A45 to the north.

Apart from those records relating to the medieval field system, no archaeological sites or monuments lie within the site itself. There are a number within the vicinity and which impinge on the site.

The following table shows the sites and monuments listed in the record and plotted on the map (Fig 2).

*Table 1: Historic Environment Record details*

HER No	NGR SP:	Details of results
4978/0/1	760 581	A small hoard of Romano-British coins found within an urn in Hardingstone Field in 1845. Local information sites it on the north-west side of the village
5007/0/4	7624 5802	During the construction of the golf course the only feature noted was a wide ditch traced for 25m. A clay pipe in the upper fill was the only dating evidence
5017/1/1	7637 5885	A hollow-way runs north for about 200m from the west end of Back Lane; up to 20m wide and 2m deep and forms the south end of the old road leading towards the east gate into Northampton, it crossed the River Nene at Nunn Mills. Some evidence that it may have been a Roman lane called the Portway
5020/1	765 591	Battle of Northampton (Wars of the Roses), fought in 1460 between the River Nene and Delapre Abbey; the Yorkists were victorious; the slain were buried in the Abbey Church or the churchyard to the east
5023/1	7469 5861	West End Fields, Hardingstone Parish
5023/1/0	764 581	A few medieval pot sherds; probably a manuring scatter
5023/1/1	7601 5805	Part of the West End Fields, Hardingstone Parish, area of survival of ridge and furrow
5023/2	77329 58246	East End Fields, Hardingstone Parish
5023/2/1	7659 5863	Part of the East End Fields, Hardingstone parish, area of survival of ridge and furrow
8405/1/2	77109 59094	Route of an ironstone tramway

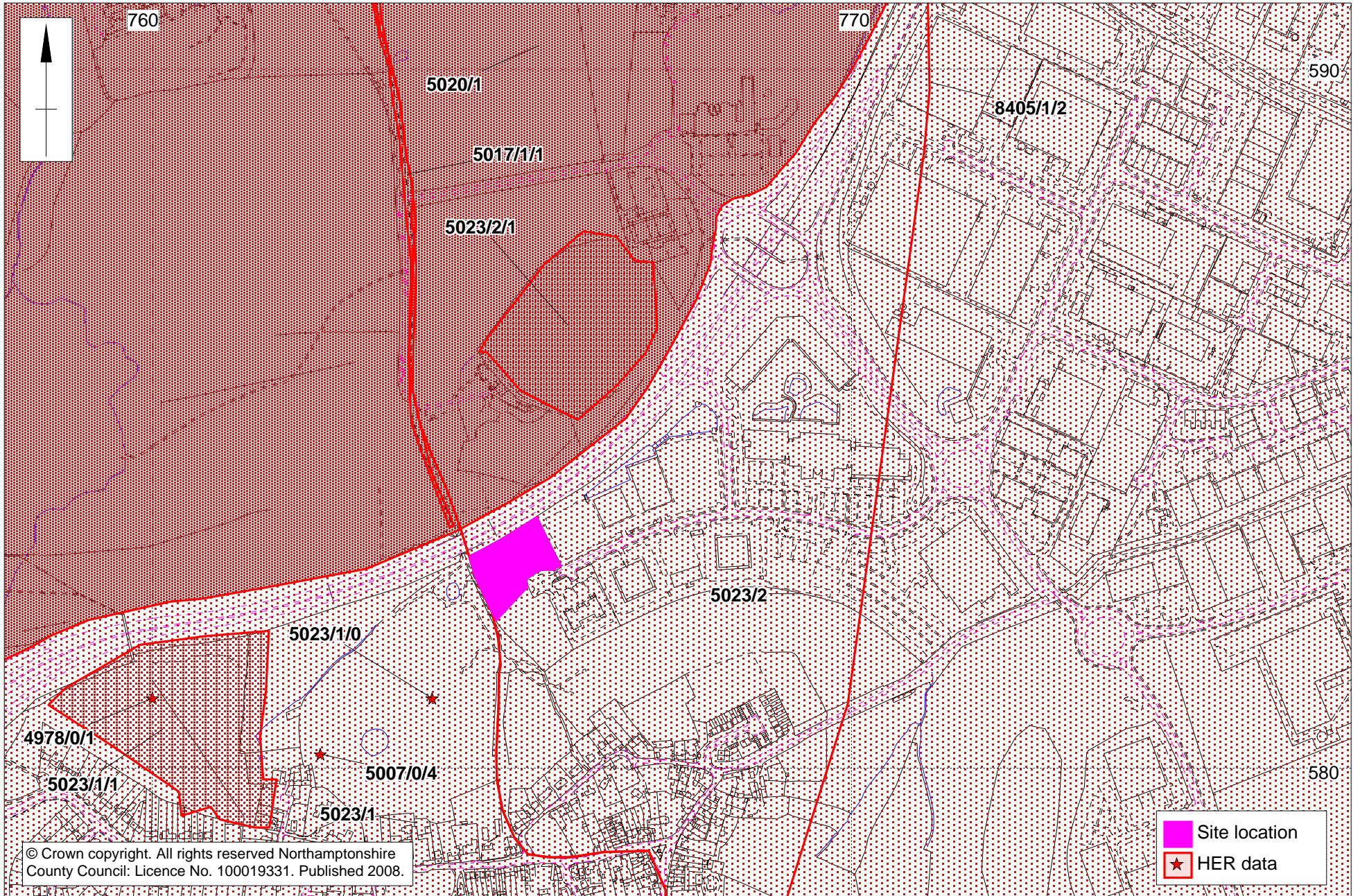
Little archaeological excavation has been conducted in the immediate vicinity of the site.

No prehistoric sites or finds have been made in the immediate vicinity of the site. A number of Palaeolithic implements were recorded from Hardingstone in the early 20th century; it is thought that they may have been discovered in the gravel pits to the north of the parish (RCHM 1985). Beyond the scope of the HER search, cropmark evidence of prehistoric enclosures and a possible Neolithic cursus has



Scale 1:7,500

Historic Environment Record data Fig 2



been recorded about 700m away, to the north-east of the site. Iron Age settlement remains have been noted on the south side of the village.

A small Roman coin hoard was found somewhere to the north-west of the village during the 19th century (HER no 4978/0/1). This may have been an isolated event.

An earthwork to the south of the site and further evidence to the north indicates the route of the old road between Hardingstone and Nunn Mills (HER no 5017/1/1). The route of the road appears to follow the western boundary of the site. The historic maps (Walker 2008, figs 4-9) show the route of the road north to Nunn Mills, although by the early 20th century much of the course is only evident as a footpath. The road certainly dates to the medieval period at least, since its course demarcated the division between the western and eastern field systems of the parish. The road was historically known as the 'Portway'. During the Saxon period road names that included the term 'port' tended to refer to any paved or metalled route, ie an important route that would have lead to a port and dated back to the Roman period (Ian Meadows pers comm).

A watching brief undertaken during the construction of the adjacent golf course found a wide ditch, probably dating to the post-medieval period.

The site has not been subject to previous archaeological intervention.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the work, as defined in the archaeological brief, was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of an archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting (NNCC CAA 2010).

The regional research framework is provided by English Heritage (1991 and 1997). Specific aims include:

- Establishing the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site;
- Recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

The records will be organised and offered for deposition with Northampton Borough Museum to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

## 4 THE METAL DETECTING SURVEY

By Steve Critchley

### 4.1 Methodology

Prior to trial trenching, a rapid metal detector survey was undertaken. The systematic survey was based on a layout of 10m grids using a XP Goldmax detector, which was set to accept all metal responses using an audio iron filter to enable ferrous and non ferrous targets to be distinguished by a change in audio tone. In this way all targets could be considered and dug as required. Find spots were plotted using a Leica 1200 GPS surveying system and related to Ordnance Survey (Fig 3).

### 4.2 The survey results

An initial visual inspection of the site indicated that it had been previously stripped of its topsoil. Some of the remains of which were visible as a prominent spoil heap to the north-east extremity of the area. The north, west and east boundaries of the site were inaccessible due to mature vegetation cover. It was apparent that the site had also been landscaped to remove areas of hard standing and former site cabin bases, a process which had resulted in the incorporation of an array of modern metallic items within the top layers. The latter consisted of pieces of steel reinforcing bars, electrical wiring offcuts, aluminium framework pieces, steel reinforced concrete fragments, plus an assortment of bolts, drinks cans and the general metallic detritus of a construction site.

Detecting proved to be a difficult task due to the contamination levels over approximately 90% of the available area. Predictably the detector was swamped in some areas simply because of the intensity of the modern metallic contamination and all targets recovered in these zones were consistent with the surface contamination noted visually. During the extraction of targets the subsoil was observed to contain lumps of imported hardcore/aggregate to all depths, consistent with the incorporation of former hard standing/foundation areas during restoration.

Along the hedgerow boundary at the north of the area, a narrow strip of relatively uncontaminated land was available parallel to the A45. This zone appeared not to have been stripped of topsoil to any great extent and provided the limited number of natural targets recovered by the metal detector. During target extraction the soil was seen to be relatively uncontaminated from a depth of 0.05m to 0.10m.

*Table 2: Small finds from metal detector survey*

Layer	Small find number	Description
Subsoil	SF1	WWII .303 cartridge
Subsoil	SF2	Piece of folded lead
Subsoil	SF3	Small disk of lead
Subsoil	SF4	WWII .303 cartridge
Topsoil	SF5	Copper alloy fitting

**4.3 The finds from the metal detecting survey** by Tora Hylton

Five individual small finds were recovered during the metal detecting survey, four from subsoil deposits (SF 1-4) and one from topsoil (SF 5). All the finds are post-medieval in date and possess little intrinsic interest; they include two bullet casings and two undiagnostic fragments of lead from the subsoil (101) and a copper alloy fitting from the topsoil (100). It is recommended that the finds are discarded.

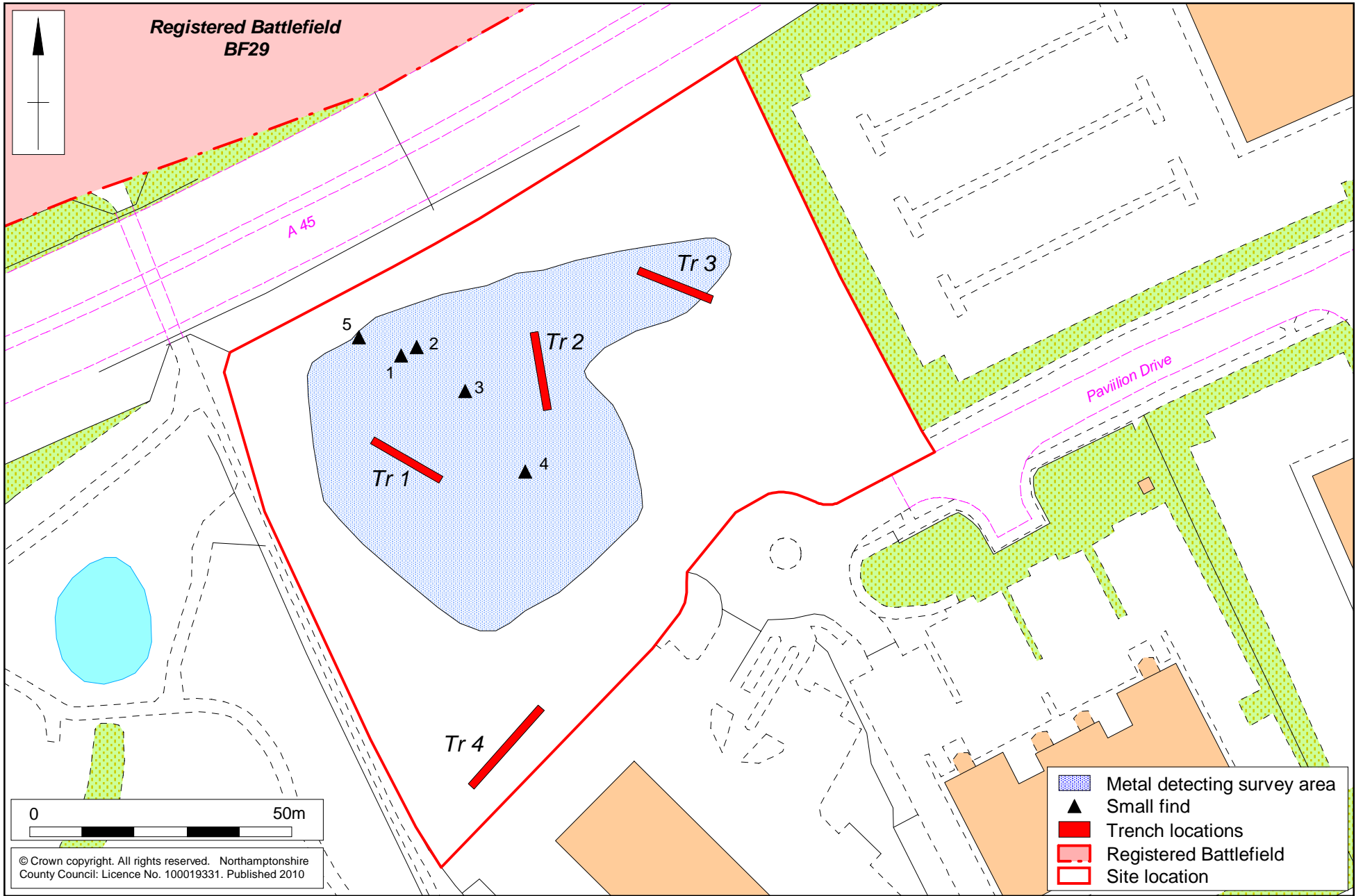
Although there are no inscriptions on the base of the bullet casings, the diameter of the bases (7.9mm) indicate that they represent parts of .303 cartridges. This type of cartridge came into service in 1888 and from 1889-1950 it was the standard British and Commonwealth military cartridge. The two fragments of lead include a rectangular-shaped piece of lead sheeting, probably an off cut and a lead disc of indeterminate use.

The copper alloy fitting although incomplete, displays similarities to belt-mounts and horse furniture which date to the 16th-17th centuries. It has an expanded central section flanked by a single raised transverse ridge and a tapered terminal. The presence of three rivets protruding from the underside, suggest that it would have been secured to items of leather.

Scale 1:1000

Area of metal detector survey, finds spots 1-5 and trial trench location

Fig 3



## 5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

### 5.1 Methodology

Four trial trenches, three 15m long (Trenches 1-3) and one measuring 20m long (Trench 4) by 1.80m wide, were excavated in accordance with the trench plan approved by NCCAA (Fig 3). They were positioned using a Leica 1200 GPS surveying system. A JCB 3CX mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first.

The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features. A hand-drawn plan of all archaeological features was made at scale 1:50 and was related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Archaeological deposits were examined by hand excavation to determine their nature. Recording followed standard NA procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (NA 2006). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. Context sheets were cross-referenced to scale plans, section drawings and photographs. Photography was with 35mm black and white film and colour slides, supplemented with digital images. Sections were drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate and related to Ordnance Survey datum. Spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to maximise the recovery of metal objects.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008).

### 5.2 General stratigraphy

Lower Lias clay, light-mid orange-brown silty clay with patches of ironstone was encountered at a depth of between 0.08 - 0.40m below the modern ground surface in all trenches (102, 202, 302 and 404). Above this the subsoil was mid grey-orange-brown silty clay loam and was present in all four trenches (101, 201, 301 and 401). The topsoil was dark greyish-brown slightly clayey loam, which was only present at the far north boundary of the site and observed during the metal detecting survey (Fig 3, plot SF5).

The ground had been heavily disturbed as a result of removing the majority of the topsoil, presumably when the neighbouring plots were being prepared for development as the area was previously a larger plot of land which had been subdivided. At the south-west and south boundaries, made-ground was evident, especially in Trench 4 where a concrete base and grade 1 foundation stone with a thickness of between 0.20m - 0.40m was present (Fig 4). At the south-east corner a tarmac surface and associated services for temporary buildings remained.



Trench 4, north section, made ground, looking north

Fig 4

### 5.3 The archaeological evidence

No archaeology was encountered in Trenches 1-3. The trench locations are shown in Figure 3 and an inventory of contexts is provided in Appendix 1.

#### *Trench 1*

Trench 1 was oriented north-west to south-east and was located in the north-west of the site (Fig 3). There were no archaeological features present.

#### *Trench 2*

Trench 2 was oriented north-south and was located centrally, north within the site (Fig 3). There were no archaeological features present.

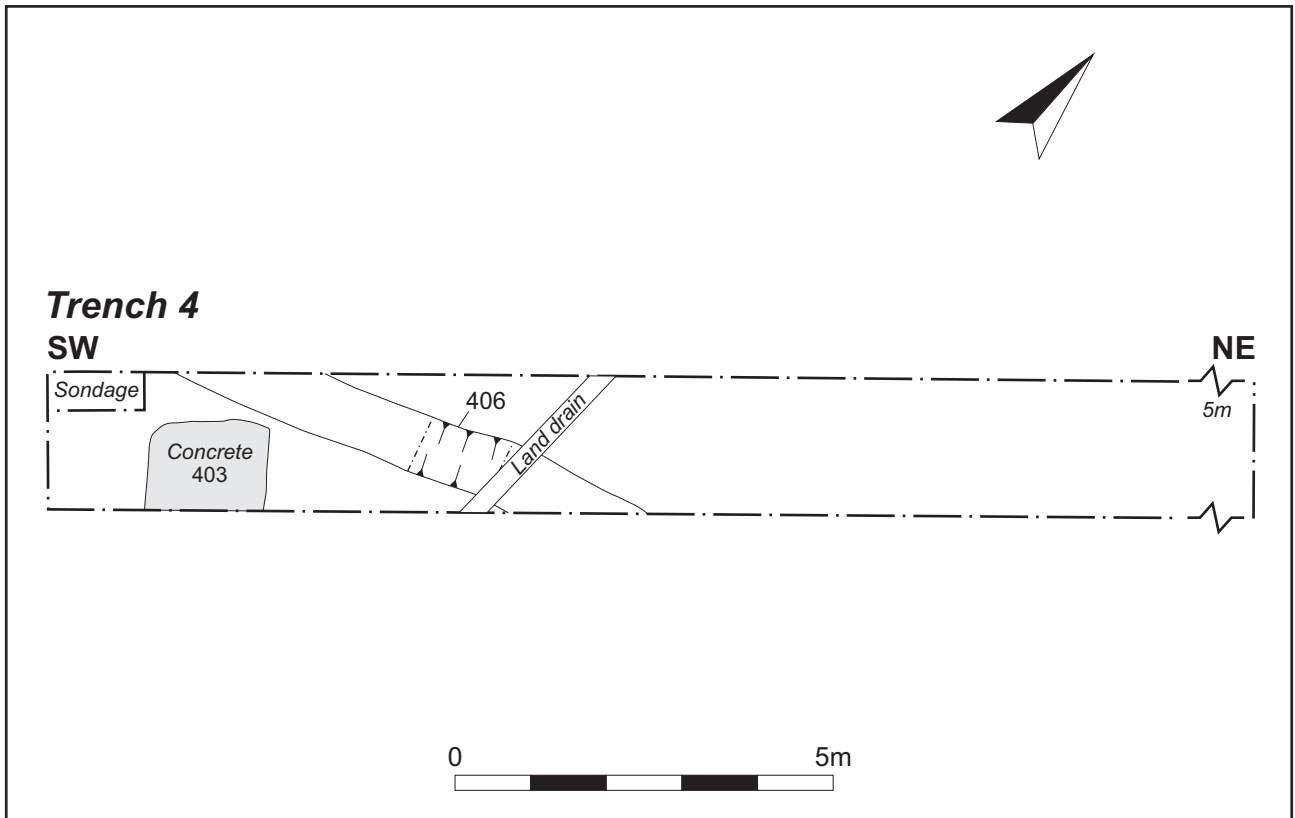
#### *Trench 3*

Trench 3 was oriented north-west to south-east and was located in the east of the site (Fig 3). There were no archaeological features present. A sherd of Potterspury ware (1250-1600) from the subsoil (301) showed signs of abrasion consistent with it being found within the ploughsoil. It was discarded.

#### *Trench 4*

Trench 4 was oriented north-east to south-west and was located in the south-west corner of the site to investigate the possible line of the trackway/Portway recorded on the Historic Environment Record map (Figs 2 and 3). No evidence was found for the trackway or Portway.

At the western end of the trench, there was a ditch, [406], aligned east to west with shallow sloping sides and a flat base (Figs 5 and 6). It measured 0.78m wide, 0.12m deep and was filled with compact grey-black silty clay (405). The ditch was cut by a 20th-century ceramic land drain (Fig 7). A concrete base, (403), measuring 1.60m



Plan of trench 4 Fig 5



Trench 4, general view, looking east Fig 6



long, 1.20m wide and at least 0.35m deep had been inserted into the natural substrate to the west of the ditch (Fig 6). Overlying the ditch and concrete base was a layer (402) of grade 1 foundation stone, 0.24 – 0.41m thick, which may indicate the formation of a foundation base for temporary buildings on the site. There were no finds present.



Trench 4, Ditch [406] and modern land drain, looking south-west

Fig 7

## 6 DISCUSSION

Given the proximity of the development site to the registered battlefield of the Battle of Northampton (1460), a rapid metal detector survey was undertaken which located five artefacts dating from the 16th to 20th centuries. Two pieces of lead, a copper alloy belt or harness fitting and two .303 rounds were recovered. It is possible that the remains of the two .303 rounds indicate the far southern boundary of the Delepré estate may have been used during the World War Two as a practice ground for the local Home Guard. None of these artefacts are associated with the battle or its aftermath.

Following the survey, archaeological trial trench evaluation, consisting of the excavation of four trenches, identified the base of an undated ditch in Trench 4. Its function was uncertain but it may have been a boundary ditch.

A single sherd of abraded, undiagnostic Potterspury ware was recovered from the subsoil in Trench 3 and is likely to have been deposited as a result of manuring practices in medieval times.

Generally, the site was observed to comprise made-ground, including concrete pads, occurring in the south and south-west of the site. The topsoil over much of the area had been removed, probably in preparation for subsequent development, and at the same time as the neighbouring plots had been built on in recent years.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

Trench	Context	Type	Description	Dimensions /thickness (m)	Artefact type
	100	Layer	Topsoil	0.05 – 0.08m thick	
1	101	Layer	Subsoil	0.08m thick	
	102	Layer	Natural, mid orange-grey/brown silty clay with ironstone outcrops		
2	201	Layer	Subsoil	0.05 – 0.15m thick	
	202	Layer	Natural, mid orange-grey/brown silty clay with ironstone outcrops		
3	301	Layer	Subsoil	0.22m thick	Potterspurgy ware sherd
	302	Layer	Natural, mid orange-grey/brown silty clay with ironstone outcrops		
4	401	Layer	Subsoil	0.09-0.19m thick	
	402	Layer	Grade 1 chipping foundation	0.24m-0.41m thick	
	403	Base	Modern concrete base	1.60m long 1.20m wide more than 0.35m deep	
	404	Layer	Natural, mid orange-grey/brown silty clay with ironstone outcrops		
	405	Fill of [406]	Dark grey-black silty clay with charcoal lumps and decayed vegetation	0.78m wide 0.08-0.12m deep	
	406	Cut of ditch	Linear, E-W, shallow sided with flat base		



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