



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

## Archaeological evaluation (Phase 1) at Lilford Lodge Farm, Oundle, Northamptonshire April 2011



### Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Northamptonshire  
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## QUALITY CONTROL

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Verified by	Anthony Maull		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

## OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Archaeological evaluation (Phase 1) at Lilford Lodge Farm, Oundle, Northamptonshire	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook the first phase of a trial trench evaluation on the River Nene floodplain at Lilford Lodge Farm, Oundle, Northamptonshire. No archaeological features were revealed and no artefacts were collected. Deep deposits of alluvium lay across the site, which forms the northern end of a proposed marina development.	
Project type	Trial excavation	
Site status	Rural	
Previous work	Watching brief (NA 2000), Desk-based assessment (Dawson 2010)	
Current Land use	Pasture	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	n/a	
Significant finds	n/a	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Lilford Lodge Farm, Lilford, Oundle, Northamptonshire	
Study area	3.2ha/11.5ha	
OS Easting & Northing	TL 035 854	
Height OD	22mOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting	
Director/Supervisor	Paul Mason	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull (NA) Mike Dawson (CgMs)	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date/end date	4/4/11-5/4/11	
ARCHIVES		
	Location	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	n/a	n/a
Paper	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Site records, photographic, drawings
Digital	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Mapinfo GIS data, photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
	Unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Archaeological evaluation (Phase 1) at Lilford Lodge Farm, Oundle, Northamptonshire	
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology Report 11/93	
Author(s)	Paul Mason	
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# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT LILFORD LODGE FARM

## LILFORD, OUNDLE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

APRIL 2011

### ABSTRACT

*Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook the first phase of a trial trench evaluation on the River Nene floodplain at Lilford Lodge Farm, Oundle, Northamptonshire. No archaeological features were revealed and no artefacts were collected. Deep deposits of alluvium lay across the site, which forms the northern end of a proposed marina development.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of their client, Fisher German LLP, to undertake the first of three phases of trial trench evaluation at Lilford Lodge Farm (NGR SP; Fig 1). The work was undertaken at the request of Northamptonshire County Council's Archaeological Advisor to inform proposals for a marina development.

The evaluation complied with a Written Scheme of Investigation formulated by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2011) in accordance with the methodologies set out in a brief prepared by Northamptonshire County Council's Archaeological Advisor (NCC 2011). It was undertaken between 4 and 5 April 2011. A total of four trenches were excavated across the northern part of proposed development area.

The site code OLL11 was allocated to the project and the site archive will be held at Northamptonshire Archaeology offices until a suitable repository has been identified.

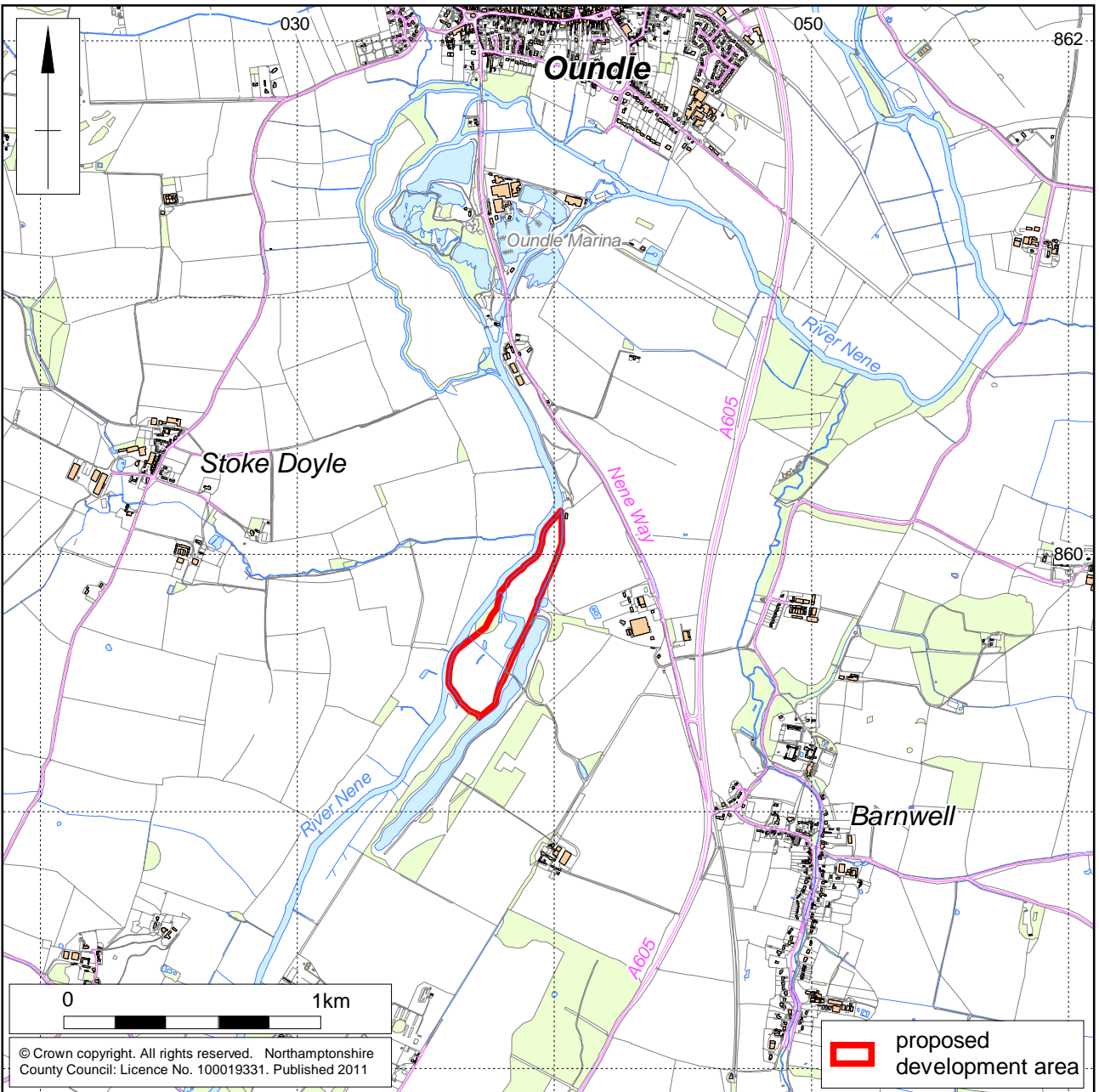
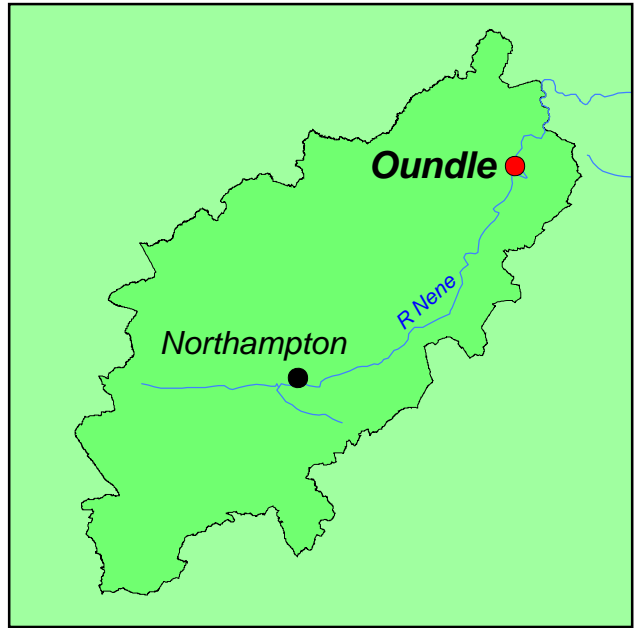
## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Topography and geology

Lilford Lodge Farm is located approximately 3km south of Oundle, to the west of the A605. The River Nene forms the western boundary of the farmland. The proposed development area (11.5ha) is located on the floodplain to the north-west of the farm buildings and is bounded by fields to the north, a complex of small lakes and ponds to the east and south and the river to the west.

The current survey targets the northern end of the proposed development area (c 3.2ha), which was previously used for pasture before the grass was stripped off prior to the evaluation to prevent birds from nesting (Fig 2). The land hereabouts lies at 22-23mOD.

The geology is recorded as Great Oolite overlain with alluvium (British Geological Survey).



Scale 1:25,000

Site location Fig 1



View of site, pre-excavation, looking north

Fig 2

## 2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The following summary of the site's historical/archaeological background is paraphrased from the written scheme of investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2011).

A desk-based assessment of the site and its immediate environs has been carried out by CgMs (Dawson 2010). Much of the known archaeological find spots and sites lie on the first terrace gravels overlooking the River Nene. This part of the Nene valley was subject to seasonal flooding and so the area is likely to have been marginal land. The earliest known occupation or use of the area was in the Neolithic period when some short term tasks were undertaken following the Neolithic tree clearances. Occupation of the terraces into the Roman period is noted in the archaeological record; with sites in close proximity to what must have been an important transport and communications route. The Roman town of Ashton, near Oundle lies some 3km to the north. No Anglo-Saxon activity has been recorded within the study area and in the medieval period the proposed development area was on the western boundary of the manor of Lilford. Given the marginal nature of the land it is probable that the area was used for summer grazing and fishing. The most definite and tangible change to the landscape was the excavation and subsequent backfilling of channels associated with the River Nene navigation. The straightening of the River Nene is evident on the historic maps and the river improvement Acts of 1724 and 1737. The previous works suggest archaeological evidence at Lilford Lodge may survive but that this may be affected by later works associated by the construction of the Nene Valley Navigation (late 18th and 19th centuries).

A watching brief on land to the immediate south-east of the proposed development area was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 1999 (NA 2000). A single undated and heavily truncated ditch was investigated and residual finds dating from the

Neolithic to medieval periods were found in alluvial deposits and plough soil.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Written Scheme of Investigation (NA 2011), with reference to the brief (NCC 2011), defined the aims of the evaluation as follows:

The principal aim of archaeological evaluation was to quantify the quality and extent of the archaeological resource and inform further decisions regarding the archaeological mitigation strategy for the site. It aimed to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial for important archaeological remains within the application area.

The specific objectives of the trial trenching programme were, therefore, as follows:

- To determine or confirm the nature and character of any remains present
- To determine or confirm the date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence
- To determine or confirm the extent of any remains
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeo-environmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present
- To provide the basis for the design of a mitigation strategy.

Given the low potential for early period archaeology as a result of the 18th and 19th-century river improvement works the following points from the regional research frameworks (Campion 2006, Cooper 2006) were noted:

- The impact of a 18th and 19th century river navigation on earlier archaeological features.

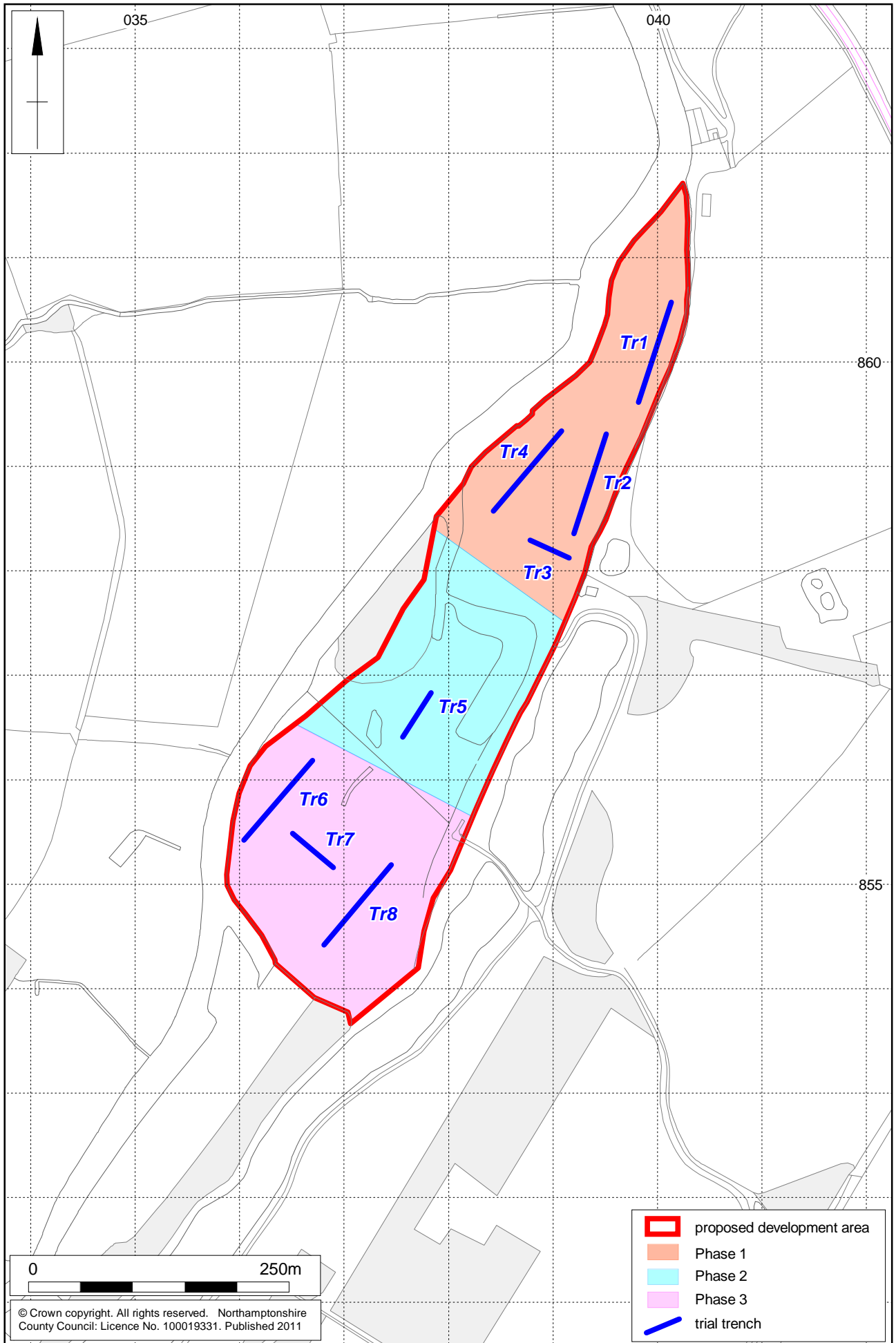
## **4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE**

### **4.1 Methodology**

A total of four trenches, measuring between 40m and 100m long, were set out in pre-agreed positions using a Leica System 1200 GPS (Fig 3). The original grassed surface together with some of the topsoil had already been partially removed to deter nesting birds.

Overburden was removed by tracked mechanical digger fitted with a 2.2m-wide toothless ditching bucket to expose the first significant archaeological level, or in the absence of archaeology, the geology. Cleaning of exposed surfaces, hand excavation and recording progressed in accordance with the methodologies set out in the Written





1:5,000

Trench location plan Fig 3

Scheme of Investigation (NA 2011), Northamptonshire County Council's brief (NCC 2011) and in fulfilment of the standards set by the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (IfA 2008).

Following the completion of the work the trenches were left open at the request of the client.

## 4.2 Results

The geology in the south-eastern part of the survey area (exposed in Trenches 2 and 3) comprised sand and gravel lying at depths of 0.85-1.20m below the existing ground level. This was overlain by alluvial deposits of light yellow-blue-brown silty clay (Fig 4), lying up to 1.10m thick, and a partially truncated topsoil, up to 0.16m thick.

In the north and western part of the site (Trenches 1 and 4) the alluvium was deeper, up to 1.65m thick, and overlay a greyish-blue clay, 1.15m thick where exposed in a test pit in the centre of Trench 4. Here the clay overlay a deposit of peat, exposed at a depth of 2.80m below the existing ground surface, which had probably accumulated within a former river channel (Fig 5).

No archaeological features or artefacts were present in any of the trenches.

All of the open trenches quickly filled up with ground water.

Details of the natural deposits are presented in Appendix 1.



Alluvium exposed in Trench 2, looking east Fig 4



Peat exposed in Trench 4 test pit, looking north-west Fig 5

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological features were identified as a result of the evaluation, nor were artefacts collected. Neither was there evidence for documented river navigation works of the 18th century.

The close proximity of the river has resulted in deep layers of alluvium being deposited over the entire site. The alluvium overlies blue clay - which may also be of alluvial origin - in the north-west of the site and gravel in the south-east.

The absence of artefacts in the topsoil contrasts with the results of an earlier watching brief carried out to the south-east (NA 2000). Here a modest quantity of worked flint was retrieved from the topsoil and alluvium, probably deriving from activity that took place above the floodplain.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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IfA 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*, Institute for Archaeologists

NA 2000 *Archaeological watching brief on land at Lilford Farm, Oundle, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology Report

NA 2011 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological trial trench evaluation at Lilford Lodge Marina, Oundle, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

NCC 2011 *Brief for a programme of archaeological field evaluation of land at Lilford Lodge Farm, Lilford, Oundle, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire County Council

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	100m x 2.2m NNE-SSW	503995,282007	22.10- 22.98mOD	<1.85m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay loam	0.10m	
102	Alluvium	Light yellow-blue-brown silty clay	0.90m	
103	Alluvial layer (?)	Blue-grey clay	At least 0.95m thick	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	66.5m x 2.2m NNE-SSW	503938,285883	22.21- 22.83mOD	0.85-1.05m 21.31-21.98mOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay loam	0.09-0.14m	
202	Alluvium	Light yellow-blue-brown silty clay	0.75-0.95m	
203	Geology	Orange-brown sandy clay and gravel		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	40m x 2.2m NW-SE	503898,285819	22.32- 22.34mOD	0.98-1.21m 21.13-21.34mOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay loam	0.09-0.16m	
302	Alluvium	Light yellow-blue-brown silty clay	0.89-1.09m	
303	Geology	Orange-brown sandy clay and gravel		

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
4	100m x 2.2m NE-SW	503877,285892	22.26- 22.37m	>2.80m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
401	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay loam	0.09m	
402	Alluvium	Light yellow-blue-brown silty clay	1.5-1.65m	
403	Alluvial layer (?)	Blue-grey clay	1.15m	
404	Natural layer	Black peat		



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