



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological remediation works on land off  
Bury Dyke, Crick, Northamptonshire  
February 2011



## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Northamptonshire  
County Council

Danny McAree

Report 11/73

March 2011



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## QUALITY CONTROL

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project title	Archaeological Remediation Works on land off Bury Dyke, Crick, Northamptonshire	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological remediation works on land off Bury Dyke, Crick, Northamptonshire. The works were to record disturbed archaeological horizons along the sides of two trenches cut through the earthwork remains of the shrunken medieval village at Crick. Medieval pottery was recovered from cut features exposed in the sides of the trenches.	
Project type	Archaeological Remediation Works	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Open paddock	
Future work	None	
Monument type/period	Earthworks of shrunken medieval village	
Significant finds	Medieval pottery, pits	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Land off Bury Dyke, Crick	
Study area (sq.m or ha)		
OS Easting & Northing	SP 58930 72635	
Height OD	134.5m OD	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Daventry District Council	
Project brief originator	Liz Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Iain Soden	
Project Manager	Danny McAree	
Sponsor or funding body	Mrs Beasley	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	9th February 2011	
End date	26th February 2011	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Content</b>
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)
Title	Archaeological Remediation Works on land off Bury Dyke, Crick, Northamptonshire	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMEDIATION WORKS  
ON LAND OFF BURY DYKE, CRICK  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
FEBRUARY 2011**

**ABSTRACT**

*Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological remediation works on land off Bury Dyke, Crick, Northamptonshire. The works were to record disturbed archaeological horizons along the sides of two trenches cut through the earthwork remains of the shrunken medieval village at Crick. Medieval pottery was recovered from cut features exposed in the sides of the trenches.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological remediation works on 9th February 2011 on land off Bury Dyke, Crick, Northamptonshire (NGR 458930 272635, Fig 1). Daventry District Council had served enforcement notices on the land owner following the stripping of topsoil, building of ramps and humps and the excavation of troughs or trenches for the creation of a BMX track on land off Bury Dyke, Crick. The Assistant Archaeological Advisor to Northamptonshire County Council advised that the groundworks had damaged potentially significant archaeological remains on the site (Mordue 2010).

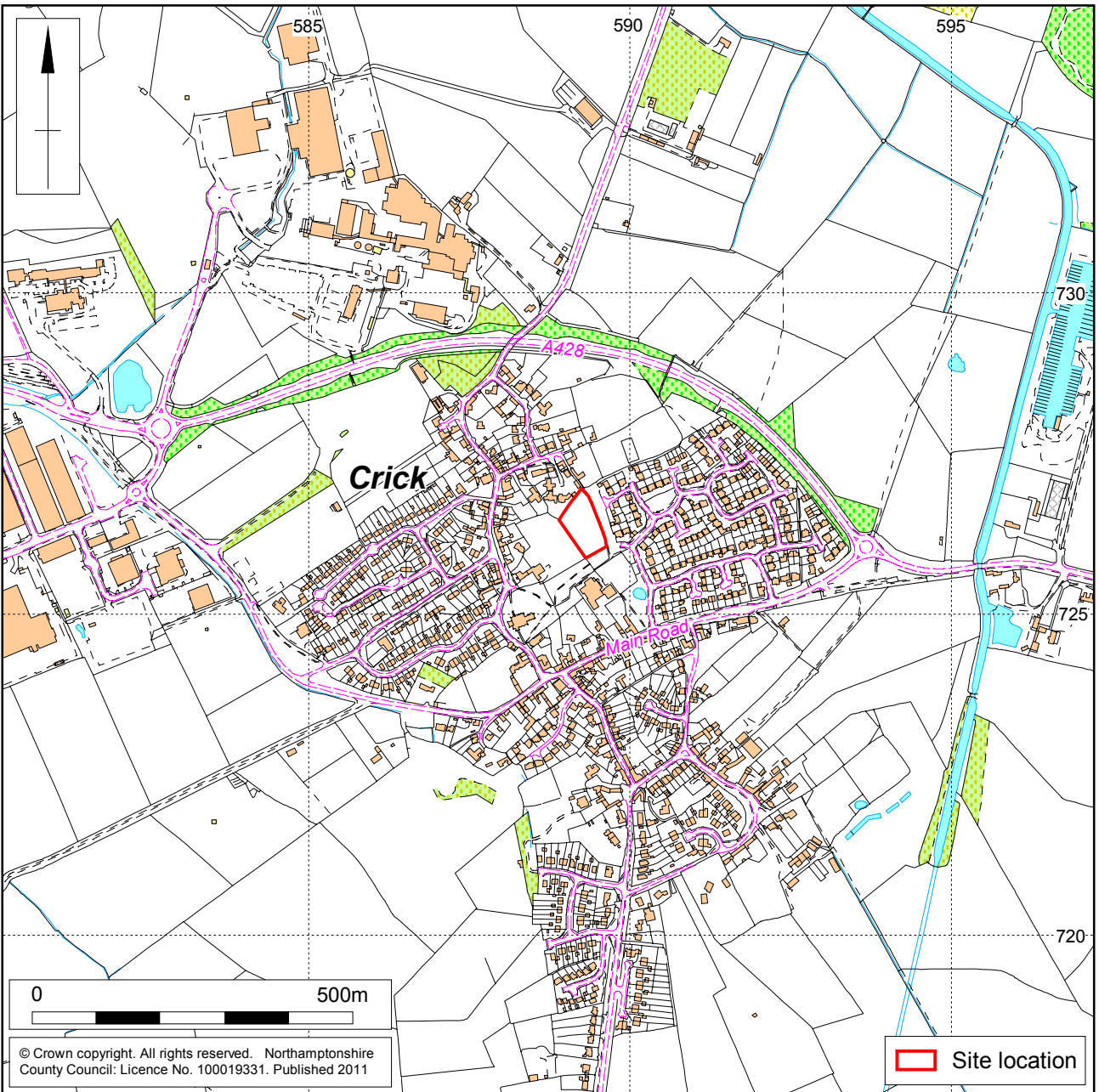
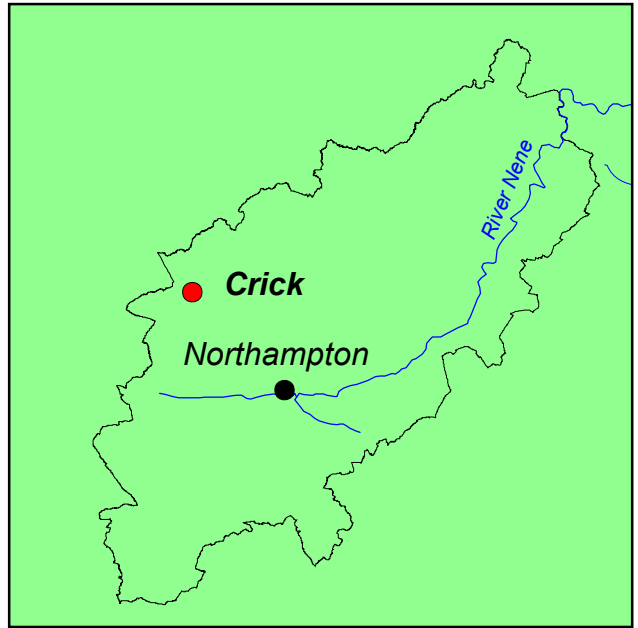
The fieldwork meets the standards and requirements contained within the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008).

**2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

The site is located to the north of the historic centre of Crick and contains earthwork remains of tracks, house and building platforms relating to the medieval occupation of this part of the village. The site is located to the north of Church Lane and forms part of the land belonging to The Elms Farm located on Church Lane immediately to the west of the historic parish church of St Margaret. The land is bounded to the south by a close boarded fence separating it from another paddock at the rear of The Elms Farm, to the west it is bounded by modern property boundaries, to the north there is a stock fence separating it from a landscaped open space along Bury Dyke, to the east, a fence and a public footpath forms a boundary between the site and the village school to the east. The ground is open grassland used until recently as a paddock for a pony.

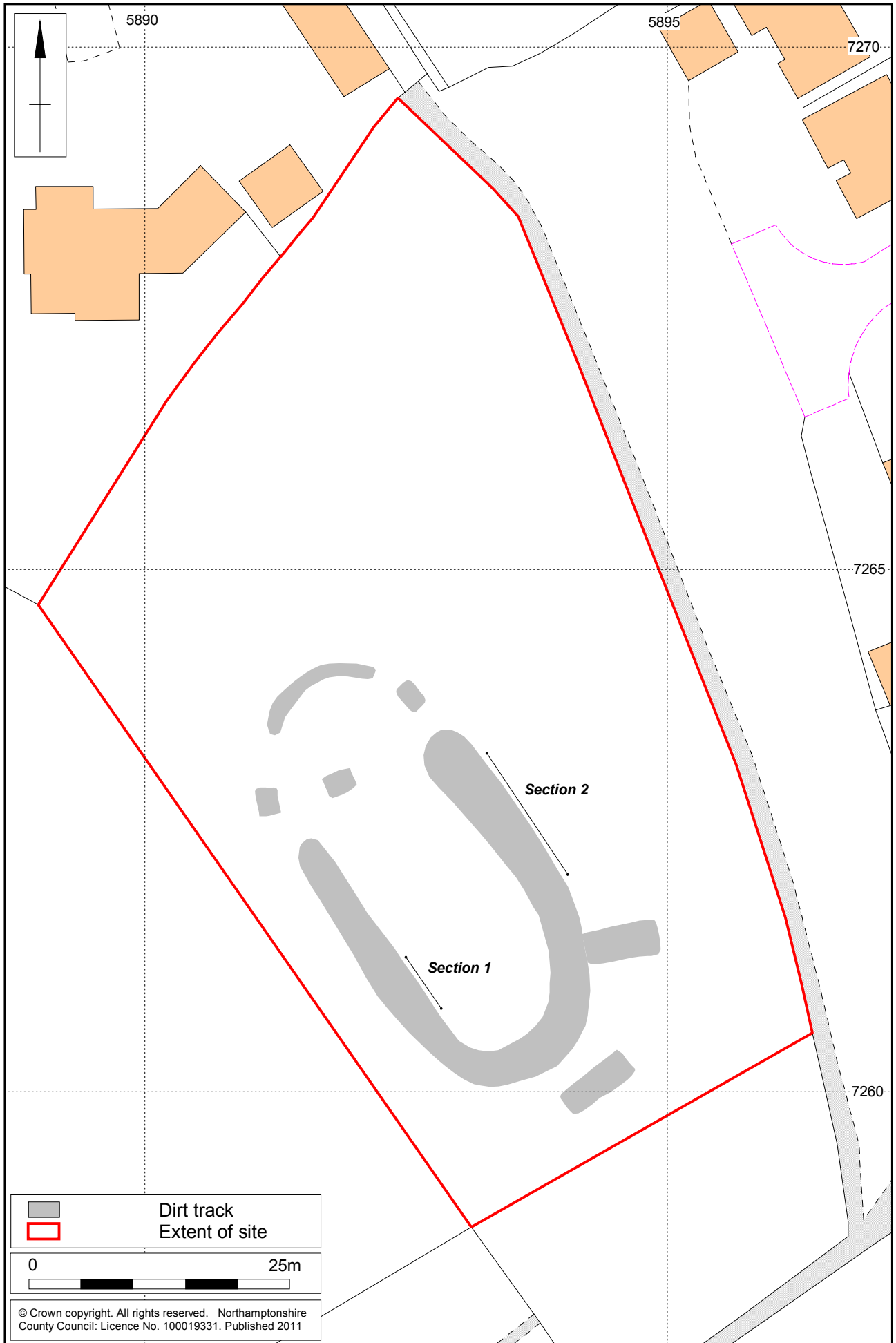
The works required a walk-over survey of all the areas of disturbance and the recording of any archaeological horizons or features exposed in the groundworks to create the BMX track. The works were restricted to cleaning and recording the existing ground disturbance, no new excavation was authorised.

The underlying geology is mapped as interbedded siltstone and mudstone of the Dyrham Formation. The superficial geology is unconsolidated gravels, sand, silt and clay till of the Mid Pleistocene-Diamicton. The soils are slowly permeable, seasonally wet, slightly acid but base rich loamy and clayey soils, generally of moderate fertility and traditionally used for seasonally wet pasture and woodland. They are characterised by grassland with some arable and forestry ([landis.org.uk/soilscapes](http://landis.org.uk/soilscapes)).



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:500

General site plan showing the dirt track Fig 2



### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Historical background

Crick derives its name from a single element: **Cruc** (Old English) meaning 'hill, eminence or cliff'. This original meaning is still carried by the adjacent high point on the edge of the village known as 'Crack Hill'.

Crick is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 when it was in the possession of Geoffrey de la Guerche. Geoffrey was a Breton knight who was rewarded by King William for his support in the Conquest of England and the subsequent rebellions in the early part of his reign. Geoffrey held lands in Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire with his main seat of power at Monks Kirby in Warwickshire. At the time of the survey, Crick comprised three full hides and three *virgates* (a hide comprised four virgates). A hide was a notional measure used to indicate the level of taxation to be levied on an estate. Although it could vary in size depending on the fertility of the soil and whether it would support arable or stock farming, each hide was considered sufficient to support an extended family for a year. In the midlands, a hide is generally taken to equate to about 120 acres (48 hectares).

Only the heads of household were recorded in the Domesday Survey so the 31 individuals represent that number of families, a substantial village population, large enough to support its own priest and almost certainly, their own church. The present church of St Margaret is almost certainly the successor of this earlier church.

Crick appears to have grown and developed from the 11th to the 14th centuries with arable in the open fields around the village. The village developed wool and weaving during this period and the grazing of sheep became more widespread.

The original village is believed to have been laid out with two roughly parallel lanes connected by short streets forming a 'ladder' like plan. The earthworks preserved in the remediation area, the close to the south and the field now occupied by the new housing development of Bury Dyke probably represent housing plots, lanes, gardens and outhouses in the north-east element of this original layout.

It is not known when this area was abandoned but it is possible that the 'wasting' of two halls, a cottage and a sheepsote carried out in 1380 by Andrew Gyldford who held the manor at that time may record the date of its clearance (RCHME Vol 2, 1979, Central Northamptonshire). Another possibility for the abandonment of this part of the village is the effects of plague that decimated the population of Europe in the 14th century. The plague struck the Midlands again and again in the early, mid and late 1300s. By the early 1400s, Britain may have lost almost half its population, with greater mortality in towns and cities than in more rural settlements. The loss of life in this period could easily explain the contraction of the village around its historic core and church.

Aerial photographic analysis, field survey, geophysical survey and trial trenching in advance of development have all indicated the good survival of archaeological features within the remediation area and surrounding land.

#### 3.2 Historic Mapping

The 1880 First Edition Ordnance Survey map of Crick shows the farm and remediation area have changed little in the intervening period. Both the field adjacent to the farmhouse and the paddock form part of a single, open field crossed by the footpath, now the line of Bury Dyke to the east. This open field remains unchanged through the 1900, 1952, 1955-58 and 1965 map editions.



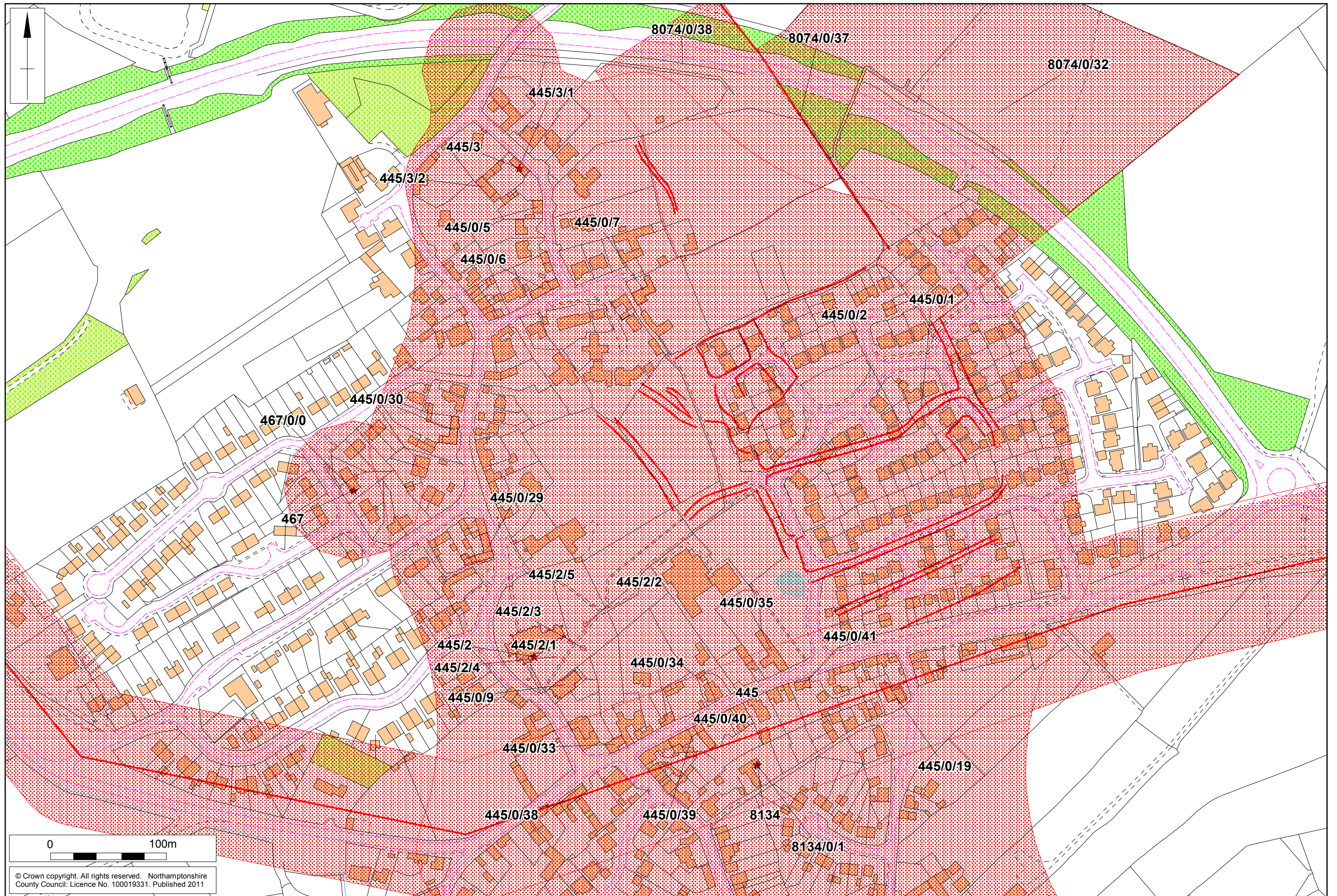
By 1973, the southern boundary of the field was opened up to link with the open field to the east of the village school creating a single large field. This format remained in place throughout the 1974-75 and 1991 map editions and was in fact only altered when the land was sold for the development of the Bury Dyke estate in the late 1990s.

### 3.3 Historic Environment Record (HER) data

A number of Historic Environment Records are held for an area 500metres in diameter around the site. These have been plotted on the modern digital mapping of the area (Fig 3) and detailed in Table 1 below.

*Table 1: Historic Environment Records Data*

HER No	Record Type	Description
445	Village	Crick village, medieval to modern
445/0/1	Earthworks	Medieval village remains, linear system, toft
445/0/2	Earthworks	Medieval remains hollow way, house platforms, road
445/0/5	Grade II Listed Building	5 Drayson Lane. Cottage late 17th century
445/0/6	Grade II Listed Building	Ashtree House & 7 Oak Lane. 18th century house/ barn
445/0/7	Grade II Listed Building	The Homestead, Oak Lane. Late 17th century house
445/0/9	Grade II Listed Building	Village school and house. 19th century- now club
445/0/19	Grade II Listed Building	United Reform Chapel, Chapel Lane. Built 1820
445/0/29	Grade II Listed Building	19 & 21 Church Street. House and barn 1700
445/0/30	Grade II Listed Building	29-31 Church Street. Early 19th century
445/0/33	Grade II Listed Building	The Malting, 17 Main Road. 17th century house
445/0/34	Grade II Listed Building	23 Main Road. Early 18th century house
445/0/35	Grade II Listed Building	Home Close and barn, Main Road. 17th-18th century
445/0/38	Grade II Listed Building	Northgate House, Main Road. 18th century
445/0/39	Grade II Listed Building	Red Lion PH and barn, Main Road. 17th century
445/0/40	Grade II Listed Building	The Old Forge, Main Road. 18th century
445/0/41	Grade II Listed Building	64 Main Road. Cottage 1770
445/2	Church	St Margaret's Church: fabric 14th century to modern
445/2/1	Grade I Listed Building	Church, 12th, 14th and 15th-century and later alterations
445/2/2	Grade II Listed Building	Chest tomb at St Margaret's Church
445/2/3	Grade II Listed Building	Chest tomb at St Margaret's Church
445/2/4	Grade II Listed Building	Chest tomb at St Margaret's Church
445/2/5	Grade II Listed Building	Chest tomb at St Margaret's Church
445/3	Farm	Farm complex, Greenhill Farm
445/3/1	Grade II Listed Building	Greenhill Farmhouse, Drayson Lane. Mid 18th century
445/3/2	Grade II Listed Building	Barn & wall E of 24 Yelvertoft Road. c1700
467	Village	Evidence of Roman activity
467/0/0	Find Spot	Fieldwalking recovered Roman pottery sherds
8074/0/32	Earthwork	Remains of ridge and furrow cultivation
8074/0/37	Earthwork	Boundary bank and ditch between village and open fields
8074/0/38	Earthwork	Remains of ridge and furrow cultivation
8134	World War II	20th-century military building
8134/0/1	Building	WW2 RAOC Home industries Scheme Small Store



## 4 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Objectives

The general purpose of this were:

- To retrieve available information from the areas of the site affected by the groundworks
- To provide an assessment of their impact
- To ensure that the reinstatement was carried out to a suitable standard

### 4.2 Methodology

A programme of controlled archaeological investigation and recording was undertaken across all the affected area.

The excavated areas were examined for evidence of archaeological deposits or features exposed in the groundworks. Where archaeological horizons or discreet features were identified, they were cleaned, examined for the presence of archaeological artefacts and fully recorded.

No new excavation was undertaken, only cleaning of previously exposed archaeological features or deposits.

The site details have been related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record of the remediation works including black and white film, colour slides and digital images was maintained. A plan and sections of the groundworks and the deeper cut sections were drawn at appropriate scales.

Final reinstatement of the site was completed on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2011. To avoid further damage to the archaeological deposits, a tractor fitted with balloon tyres and equipped with a toothless front scoop was used to backfill the areas disturbed by the groundworks. All the work was completed under the supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist.

The work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008), the *Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists* (IfA 1997, revised 2010), and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (EH 2009).

All procedures complied with the Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work guidelines.

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMEDIATION WORKS

Archaeological remediation works took place on 9th February 2011. The remediation area comprised groundworks to construct a BMX trackway up to 2.7m wide and forming an oval course 45m long and 21m wide (Figs 2, 4-5). The majority of the groundworks had progressed no further than the stripping of the grass and topsoil up to 0.15m deep (Figs 4-5).





General site view, looking north-west Fig 4

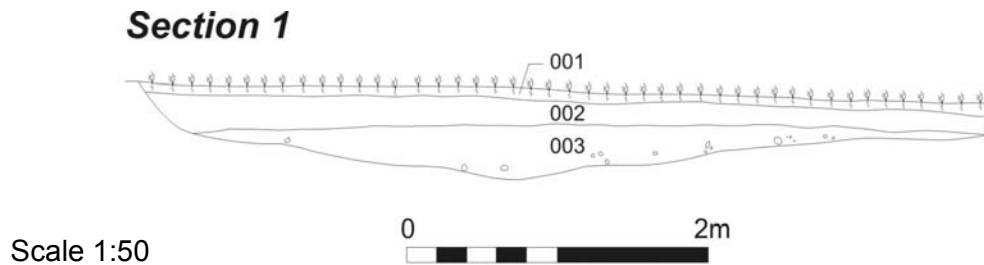


General site view, looking north Fig 5



Along both the west and east sides of the track, deeper excavations had cut through to the underlying natural sands exposing archaeological horizons and features.

To the west, the deeper excavation was 5.7m long, 2.4m wide with vertical sides along the axis of the track. It sloped gently from ground level at both ends to a depth of 0.6m (Figs 2 and 6, Section 1). There were no cut features exposed in the excavation.

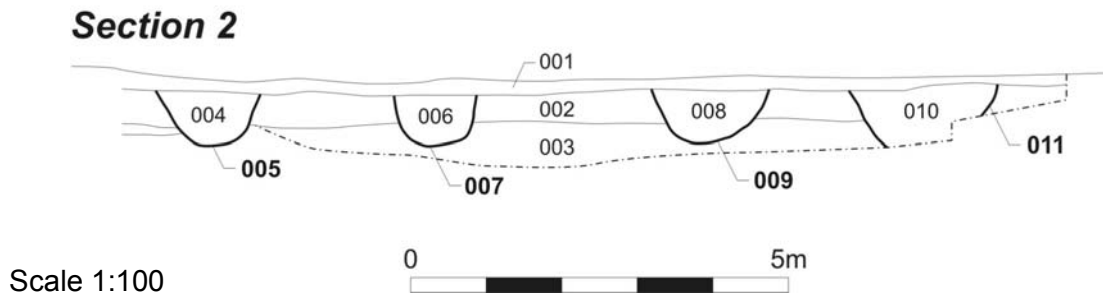


Section 1, looking east Fig 6

The underlying yellow alluvial sands (003) was exposed at between 0.3m-0.35m below the modern ground surface. It was covered with a layer of orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (002) up to 0.2m deep and mottled by root disturbance. The modern brown sandy clay loam topsoil (001) was about 0.1m deep along the length of the exposed section. Fragments of white glazed earthenware and a fragment of window glass from the topsoil are dated to the 19th century.



To the east of the track, the excavation was 12.2m long, 2.7m wide with vertical sides along the axis of the track. It sloped from ground level from both ends of the excavation to a depth of 1.4m (Figs 2 and 7, Section 2). In this trench, the natural yellow sands (003) were exposed at about 0.7m below modern ground level. It was covered with orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (002) up to 0.5m deep and mottled by root disturbance. The modern brown sandy clay loam topsoil (001) was about 0.1m deep along the length of the section.



Section 2, looking east and view looking north Fig 7

Cutting the subsoil (002) and into the underlying sand (003) at the north of the excavation was a possible ditch or pit [005], 2.1m wide and 0.7m deep with steeply sloping sides and a dished base (Figs 2, 7 and 8). It was filled with orange-brown sandy silt loam (004) containing sub-rounded river gravel, rounded pebbles up to 0.1m long, including three possibly heat shattered pebbles and occasional flecks of charcoal. A single sherd of Coventry A ware from this fill is dated to the 12th-13th centuries.





Section 2, pit [005], looking east

Fig 8



Section 2, pit [007], looking east

Fig 9



At about 2m to the south, pit [007] was 1.2m wide and 0.8m deep with near vertical sides and a rounded base (Figs 2, 7 and 9). It was filled with orange-brown sandy silt (006) containing sub-rounded gravel and river pebbles up to 0.2m long. There was very little differentiation between the pit fill and the surrounding subsoil (002). The dimensions of the pit were generally located by the presence of 'tip lines' of gravel and pebbles within the pit fill. A single sherd of Coventry A ware dated to the 12th-13th centuries was recovered from this pit fill.

In the topsoil above the section, there was an undiagnostic body sherd of medieval pottery and a single fragment of Raeren Stoneware of the 16th century.

At about 3m further south, sub-circular pit [009] was 1.1m in diameter and 0.7m deep with steeply sloping sides and a rounded base (Figs 2, 7 and 10). It was filled with brown sandy silt (008) containing sub-rounded gravel and river pebbles up to 0.12m long. There were several rounded river pebbles that appeared burnt or heat shattered. There were no finds from this pit fill.



Section 2, pit [009], looking east

Fig 10

About 1.2m further south and located on the south slope of the excavation, a possible ditch or pit [011] was 1.8m wide but only exposed up to 0.8m deep (Figs 2, 7 and 11). It had steeply sloping sides, the base was not excavated. It was filled with orange-brown sandy silt (010) containing sub-rounded gravel and river pebbles up to 0.8m long. There were no finds from this pit fill.



Section 2, pit or ditch [011], looking east

Fig 11

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The paddock in which the remediation works were located still retains the earthwork remains of earlier occupation and activity. There are two hollow-ways in the north-east of the paddock and a series of low mounds and hollows that have been interpreted as house platforms and ancillary buildings.

The groundworks to construct the BMX track were incomplete and had for the most part resulted only in grass and topsoil disturbance. The two deeper sections cut through to the underlying natural sands revealed the presence of subsoil varying in depth from 0.2m in the west to 0.5m to the east beneath the modern topsoil surface.

There were no cut features in the western of the two deep excavations. That to the east was much more substantial and cut through four pits. The pits to the north and south were exposed along the two respective sloping ramps. This allowed at least a partial plan of both of these pits to be recorded. The two central pits were extremely difficult to define, blending with the subsoil into which they were cut. The pits were identified primarily by the distinctive tip lines of gravel and pebbles within the pit fills.

Pottery from the topsoil included a sherd of undiagnostic medieval earthenware pot, probably part of a cooking or storage vessel. There was a sherd of 16th century stoneware and white glazed earthenware and glass from the 19th century. There was a surprising lack of finds within the wider area of disturbed topsoil across the remediation area and it seems likely that there has been little ploughing or manuring of this area since abandonment in the 14th century.

A single sherd of Coventry A ware was recovered from each of two pits and they can be dated to the 12th-13th centuries. This is fully in accord with the known historical occupation of the site.



Coventry A ware as the name suggests is primarily found in and around the City of Coventry. This is the first occasion that it has been recorded in this part of Northamptonshire. It may represent a seigniorial link with the de la Guerche manor at Monks Kirby, Warwickshire, much closer to the likely kiln sites. The closest find spot for Coventry A ware previously has been at Coton near Rugby.

The earthwork remains and the presence of pits containing 12th-13th century pottery indicates high potential for the survival of medieval archaeology on this site. The minimal extent of the topsoil disturbance and the lack of later pottery scatters normally expected and associated with manuring scatters indicate a substantial period of use as pasture rather than arable. This is reinforced by the surviving earthwork remains still visible across the site.

The excavation of the two deeply cut areas has clearly destroyed or disturbed some archaeology but also provided an opportunity to record the nature and date of underlying features on the site.

The reinstatement comprised the backfill of the deeply cut trenches with the upcast from their excavation. The areas of topsoil disturbance were levelled as far as possible by replacing grass and topsoil back in the areas from which they had been removed. Machine work was restricted to a minimum to prevent further damage to the archaeological landscape as the ground was water-logged and soft.



Reinstatement of site, looking south-east Fig 12

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[nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A service of Northamptonshire County Council

March 2011



Northamptonshire County Council

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