



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation on land
north of the Pitsford Centre, Moulton College, Pitsford
Road, Moulton, Northamptonshire
February 2012



Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Report 12/18

February 2012



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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		14th Feb
Verified by	Mark Holmes		14th Feb
Approved by	Andy Chapman		15th Feb

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project name	AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION ON LAND NORTH OF THE PITSFORD CENTRE, MOULTON COLLEGE, PITSFORD ROAD, MOULTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.
Short description	An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire archaeology on land north of the Pitsford Centre, Moulton College, Northamptonshire, during February 2012. The work was undertaken in advance of the construction of a new dirty water lagoon. No archaeological deposits were encountered during the course of the evaluation and only two sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered.
Project type	Trial Trench Evaluation
Site status	None
Previous work	None
Current land use	Pasture/ agricultural
Future work	None
Monument type/ period	None
Significant finds	None
PROJECT LOCATION	
County	Northamptonshire
Site address	Moulton College, Northamptonshire
OS Easting & Northing	SP 76830 67790
Area	0.014ha
Height aOD	122m aOD
PROJECT CREATORS	
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Director/Supervisor	Mark Holmes
Project Manager	Mark Holmes
Sponsor or funding body	Moulton College
PROJECT DATE	
Start date	6th February 2012
End date	7th February 2012
ARCHIVES	
Archive location	
Archive contents	Trial Trench forms (3), Col slides (19) B+C contact sheets and negs (19) digital photos (1 cd)
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
Title	An archaeological trial trench evaluation on land north of the Pitsford Centre, Moulton College, Pitsford Road, Moulton, Northamptonshire.
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Contents

- 1 INTRODUCTION
 - 2 BACKGROUND
 - 2.1 Location and topography
 - 2.2 Historical background
 - 3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
 - 4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE
 - 4.1 The excavation
 - 4.2 The pottery by Tora Hylton
 - 5 CONCLUSIONS
- BIBLIOGRAPHY**
- APPENDIX: INDEX OF CONTEXTS BY TRENCH**

Figures

Cover: The site, looking north

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: The development area showing surrounding cropmarks

Fig 3: Trench 3, looking south

Fig 4: The development area showing excavated trenches

Fig 5: Trench 1, looking south, showing land drains

Fig 6: Trench sections

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION
ON LAND NORTH OF THE PITSFORD CENTRE,
MOULTON COLLEGE, PITSFORD ROAD,
MOULTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FEBRUARY 2012**

Abstract

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire archaeology on land at Moulton College, Moulton, Northamptonshire during February 2012. The work was undertaken in advance of the construction of a new dirty water lagoon. No archaeological deposits were encountered during the course of the evaluation and only two sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from the subsoil.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in February 2012 prior to the construction of a new lagoon on land belonging to Moulton College, Moulton, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 76830 67790; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Acorus Rural Property Services on behalf of Moulton College in response to a brief for archaeological evaluation issued by Northamptonshire County Council's Assistant Archaeological Advisor (Mordue 2012). The investigation followed an approved specification prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2012) and adhered to the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2006) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

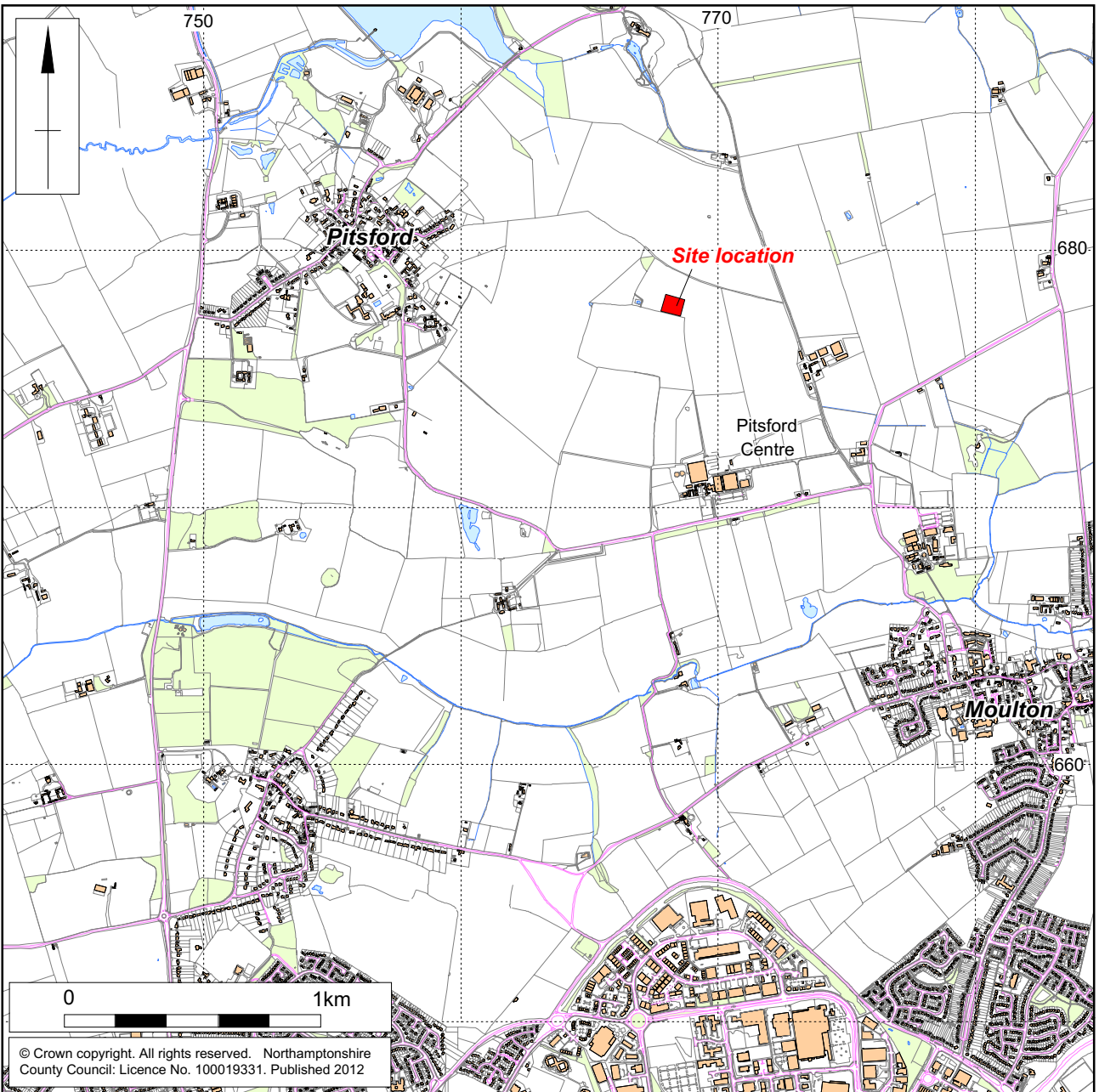
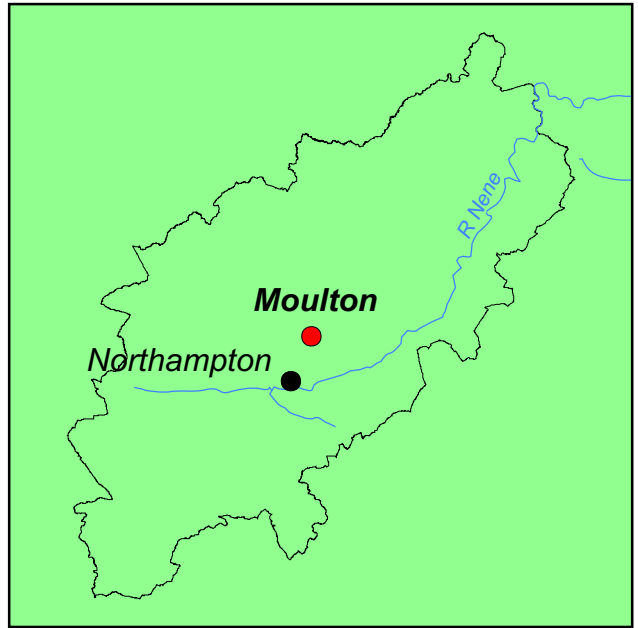
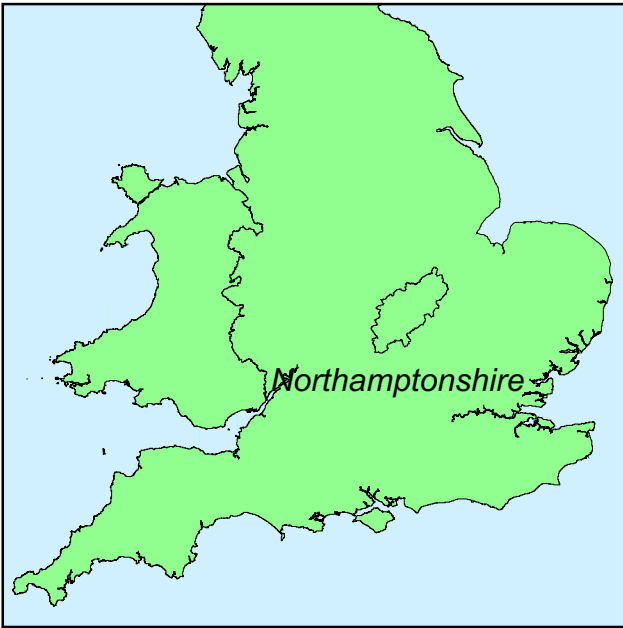
The development area is located on land north of the Pitsford Centre, approximately 1km to the east of Pitsford village. The site is bound by a trackway to the north and hedgerows to the south, east and west. A small pond is located to the west of the site.

Topographically the site slopes gently from the north and lies at a height of about 122m aOD. The proposed lagoon and surrounding compound occupy an area of roughly 0.5ha.

The underlying geology is mapped as Glacial Till overlying the Great Oolite Group. (www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html).

2.2 Historical background

Cropmark evidence shows the site to be located in a landscape of agricultural activity and settlement ranging from the prehistoric through to the Romano-British periods. Linear cropmarks to the east have been identified as possible field boundaries whilst to the north and north-west are located several enclosures and paddocks (Fig 2). Possible Bronze Age funerary sites lie to the north and south. Cropmarks identified as Iron Age and Romano-British settlements are located south of the Pitsford centre. Romano-British and medieval pottery has been previously recovered from the same field as the proposed development.



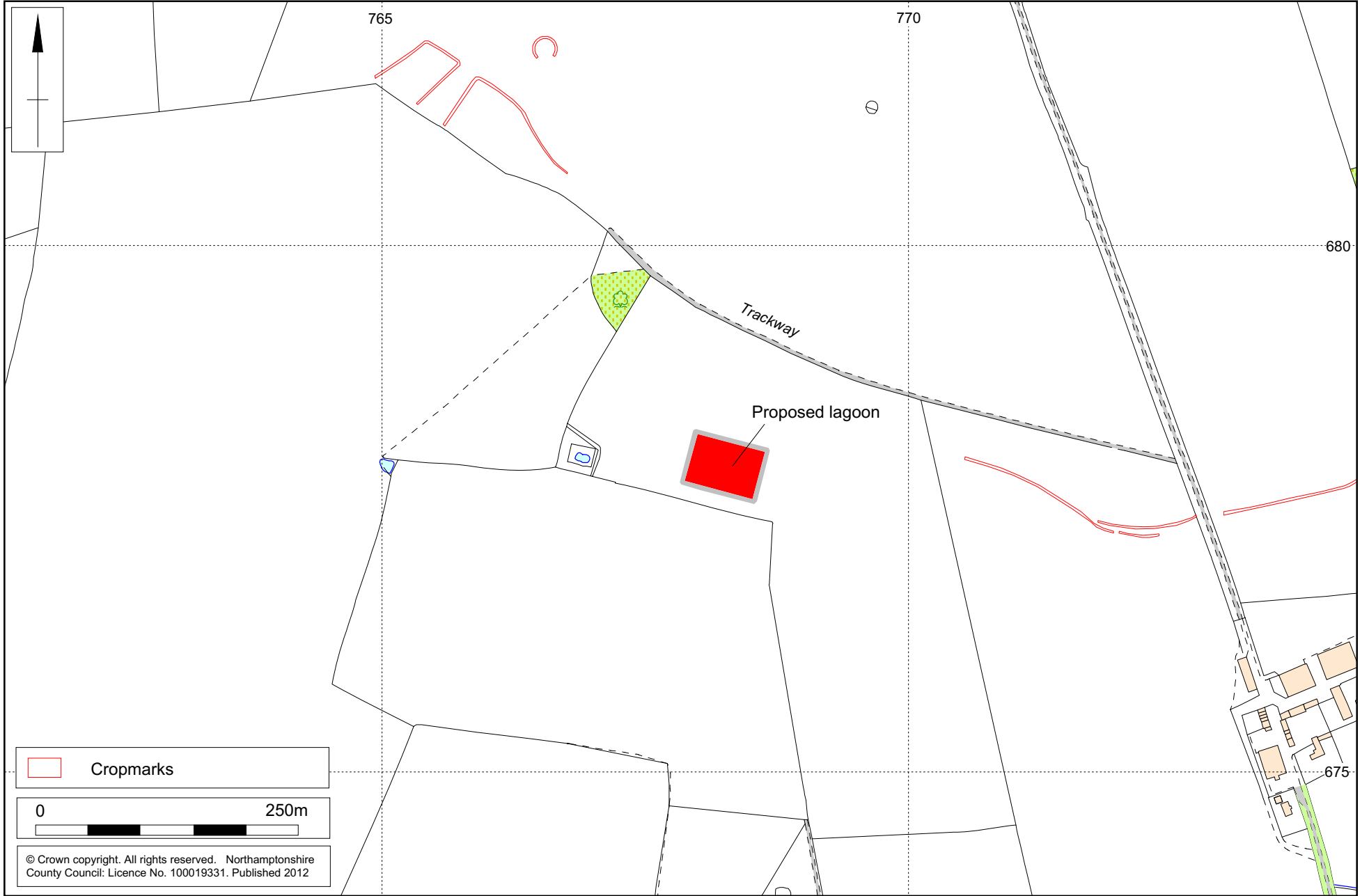
Scale 1:25,000

Site location Fig 1

Scale 1:5000 (A4)

The development area showing surrounding cropmarks

Fig 2



Cropmarks

0 250m

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3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the investigation were to:

- establish the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.
- establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;

The trenches were positioned using a Leica System 1200 GPS and were excavated, under continuous archaeological supervision, using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat toothless bucket 1.8m wide. The topsoil and subsoil were stacked separately and adjacent to the trenches. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the top of the archaeological deposits or to the natural substrate where no archaeology was encountered.

Archaeological excavation and recording followed the guidelines outlined in NA's *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (2006). Trenches were recorded following standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures and section drawings were made at an appropriate scale (1:10 or 1:20) where necessary. Trench locations were related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and levelled using GPS. A photographic record was made of the excavation, using 35mm black and white negative and colour slide film, supplemented by digital images.

All works were carried out in accordance with the specification prepared by NA (2012), the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 1985, revised 2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008). All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology's Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

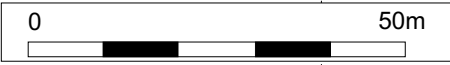
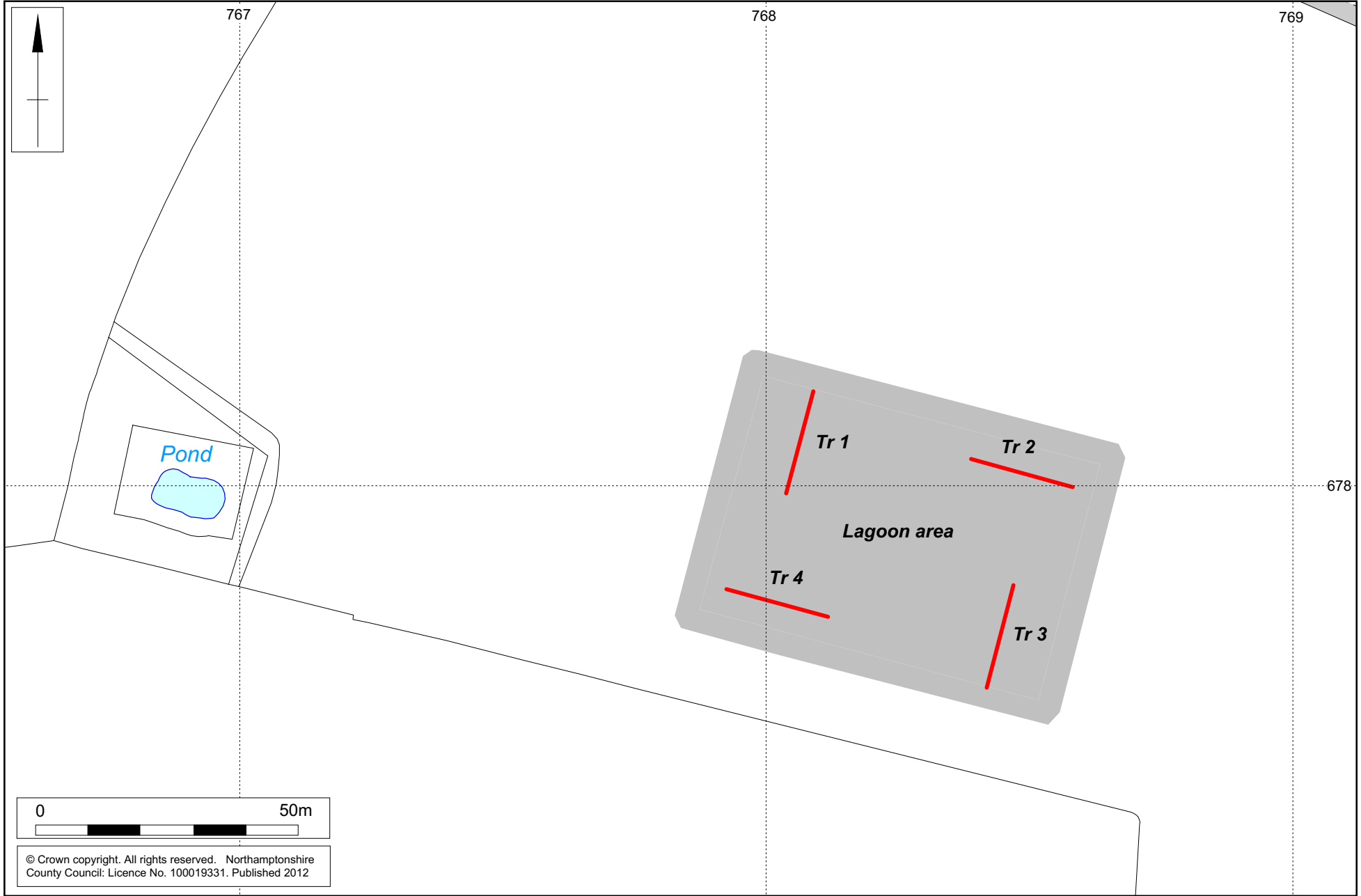


Trench 3, looking south Fig 3

Scale 1:1000 (A4)

The development area showing excavated trenches

Fig 4



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4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

4.1 The excavation

The evaluation comprised four 20m long trenches located within the proposed development area (Fig 4).

The natural substrate across the site comprised mid orange-brown silty clay, glacial till with frequent gravel and chalk fragments. It was between 0.40-0.55m below the ground surface across the evaluation. It was overlain by a subsoil of mid orange-brown silty clay with occasional gravel and pebbles which in turn was overlain by a topsoil of mid orange-grey-brown clayey silt with occasional gravel. The subsoil was 0.15-0.25m below the ground surface across the evaluation. The most southerly trenches, 3 and 4, were deeper than the northern trenches probably due to their location lower down the slope, against an existing hedgerow. (Fig 6)

The stratigraphic sequence was identical across the site and no archaeological features were present in any of the trenches.

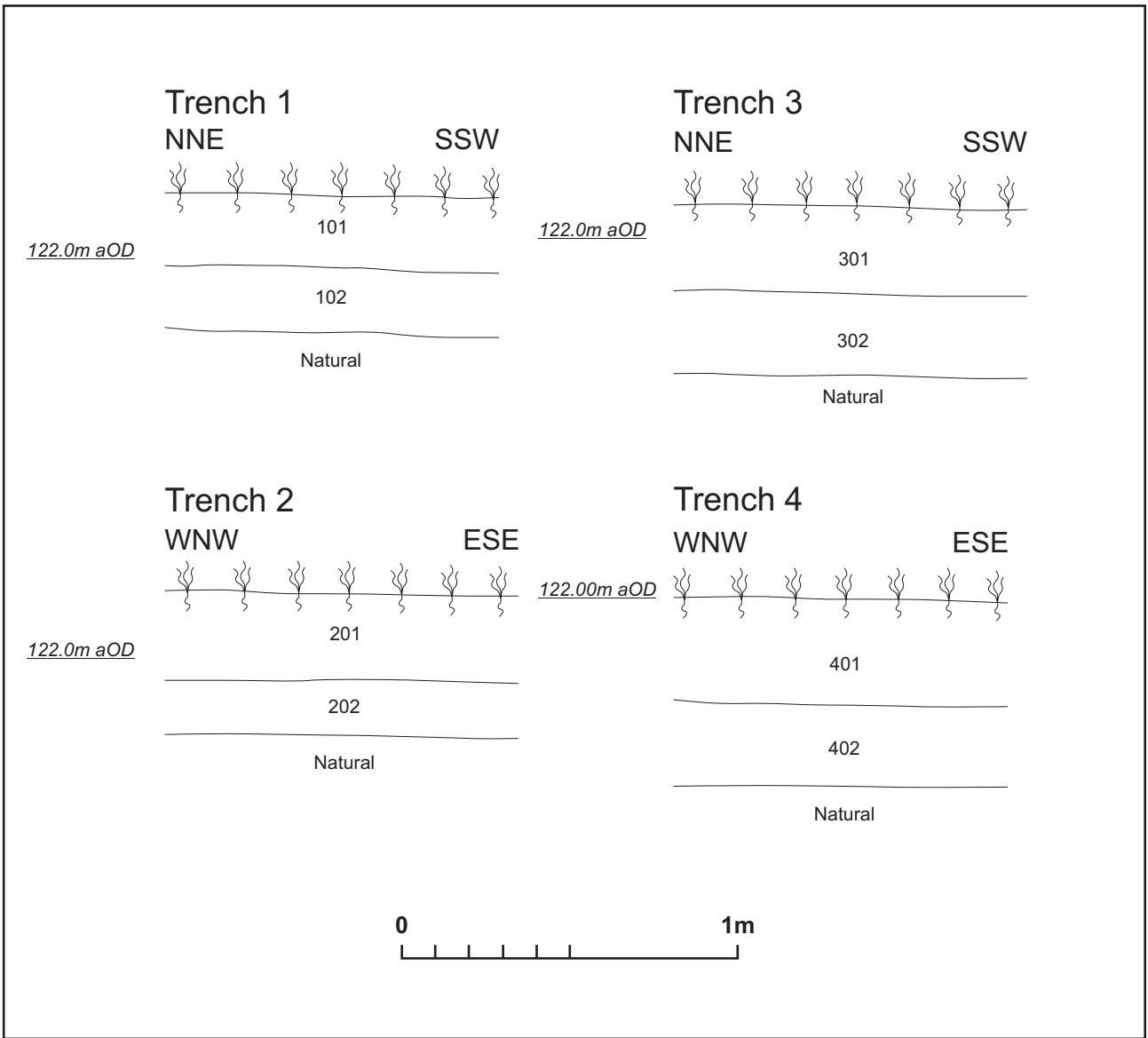
Modern land drains were encountered in trenches 1, 2 and 4, cutting from the base of the topsoil. (Fig 5)

4.2 The pottery by Tora Hylton

Two fragments of post medieval pottery were recovered from the subsoil in trenches 2 and 4. These were identified as a fragment of press moulded plate in feathered slipware, dating to c1680-c1730 and a fragment of iron glazed, red earthen ware jar, dating to the 17th – 18th centuries. These have not been retained.



Trench 1, looking south, showing land drains Fig 5



Scale 1:20

Trench sections Fig 6

5 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation has shown that although there is evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British settlement and agricultural activity in the surrounding landscape, no archaeological features were present within the development area. The lack of any evidence for later ground disturbance would indicate that this hiatus is real.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Mordue, E, 2012 *Brief for the archaeological field evaluation of land north of the Pitsford Centre, Moulton College, Pitsford Road, Moulton, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire County Council

NA 2006 *Archaeological fieldwork manual*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

NA 2012 *Archaeological field evaluation of land north of the Pitsford Centre, Moulton College, Pitsford Road, Moulton, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INDEX BY TRENCH

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
1	20m x 1.8m NNE-SSW	476806/267807	122.2m aOD	0.4-0.45m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Mid orange brown clayey silt, occasional gravel inclusions	0.23-0.28m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid orange brown silty clay, occasional gravel fragments	0.2m thick	-
103	Natural	Orange brown silty clay, glacial till, frequent gravel and chalk inclusions.	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
2	20m x 1.8m WNW-ESE	476848/267802	122.2m aOD	0.35-0.45m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Mid orange brown clayey silt, occasional gravel inclusions	0.2-0.25m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Mid orange brown silty clay, occasional gravel fragments	0.15-0.2m thick	1 sherd of post-medieval pottery
203	Natural	Orange brown silty clay, glacial till, frequent gravel and chalk inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
3	20m x 1.8m NNE-SSW	476844/267771	122.1m aOD	0.4-0.5m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Mid orange brown clayey silt, occasional gravel inclusions	0.2-0.25m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Mid orange brown silty clay, occasional gravel fragments	0.2m thick	-
303	Natural	Orange brown, silty clay, glacial till with frequent gravel and chalk inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural
4	20m x 1.8m WNW-ESE	476800/267777	122m aOD	0.53m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
401	Topsoil	Mid orange brown clayey silt, occasional gravel inclusions	0.25-0.3m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Mid orange brown silty clay, occasional gravel	0.23-0.27m thick	1 sherd of post-medieval pottery
403	Natural	Orange brown silty clay, glacial till with frequent gravel and chalk inclusions	-	-



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