



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation at Sketchley Brook, Hinckley Leicestershire March 2012



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County Council**

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Report 12/53

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS: 164027	
Project title	Archaeological evaluation of land at Sketchley Brook, Hinckley, Leicestershire		
Short description (250 words maximum)	An archaeological trial trench excavation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology at Sketchley Brook, Hinckley Leicestershire prior to proposed development on the site. Five trenches were excavated around Trench 10 from the previous evaluation, where a small pit containing prehistoric pottery and a small amount of burnt bone was identified. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Previous work	Geophysical survey and fieldwalking (Butler and Kajewski 2009)		
Current land use	Arable and derelict ground		
Future work	Additional trial trenching		
Monument type and period	Prehistoric cremation, gully, medieval and post-medieval boundary ditches		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Leicestershire		
Site address	Land at Sketchley Brook, Hinckley		
OS co-ordinates	SP 4200 9286		
Area (sq m/ha)	Up to 500 sq metres		
Height aOD	92-103m		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)		
Project brief originator	Leicestershire County Council		
Project Design originator	NA		
Director/Supervisor	Christopher Jones		
Project Manager	Steve Parry		
Sponsor or funding body	Goodman Logistic Development (UK) Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	05/03/2012		
End date	06/03/2012		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	X.A11.2012	None	
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological evaluation of land at Sketchley Brook, Hinckley, Leicestershire 2012		
Serial title & volume	12/53		
Author(s)	Christopher Jones		
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION AT
SKETCHLEY BROOK, HINCKLEY
LEICESTERSHIRE
MARCH 2012
EVENT No X.A11.2012**

Abstract

An archaeological trial trench excavation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology at Sketchley Brook, Hinckley, Leicestershire prior to proposed development on the site. Five trenches were excavated around Trench 10 from the previous evaluation, where a small pit containing prehistoric pottery and a small quantity of burnt bone was identified. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

In March 2012, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) on land adjacent to Sketchley Brook, Hinckley Leicestershire (NGR: SP 4200 9286; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Goodman Logistic Development (UK) Ltd and was undertaken, in conjunction with an archaeological watching brief elsewhere on site, to fulfil Conditions 22 and 23 of planning consent (10/00518/OUT) for the planned development of the land for retail and residential use.

The scope of works was outlined in the brief issued by Leicestershire County Council's Senior Planning Archaeologist (Clark 2012) and detailed in the written scheme of investigation prepared by NA (NA 2012). The accession number is X.A11.2012.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area the objectives of the archaeological work are to:

- Assess the archaeological significance of 'Area A' and any archaeological deposits encountered during the evaluation;
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits;
- Assess the evidence within its setting, regional context and aim to highlight any research priorities where applicable;
- Assess the results from an Environmental and/or Archaeological Scientific investigation;
- Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

The national framework for research is set out by English Heritage (1997). The broad research frameworks for the East Midlands are set out by Cooper (2006). The Research Aims set out in these documents will be addressed by the project

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Topography and geology

The proposed development is immediately adjacent to and south of the main railway line through the town of Hinckley (Fig 1). The line divides Hinckley from its southern suburb village of Burbage and the satellite hamlet of Sketchley to the south-west. Sketchley Brook runs approximately 320m south of the railway, on a north-north east to south-south-west orientation. The western, larger, portion of the site is situated in arable fields north of a sewage works, at the eastern bank of the Ashby de-la-Zouch canal and west of demolished industrial works. There is a gentle slope downwards to the south-west. Jericho Farm is located within the arable field.

The proposed development lies over a drift geology substrate of Glaciolacustrine deposits of clay and silt with alluvium close to the brook. A deposit of Till intrudes into the area on the eastern side of Jericho Farm (BGS Sheet 169). The site lies between 95m – 100m aOD rising gradually to the east.

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

Leicestershire Historic Environment Record indicates that finds of all periods have been discovered in the local area. A Neolithic polished stone axe head (MLE7236) was recovered to the south-west of the site and middle Bronze Age spearhead (MLE6351) to the east. A settlement site of middle Iron Age date was excavated by NA, south of Coventry Road 500m west of Area A (Chapman 2004).

The Watling Street Roman Road (MLE1388) is situated approximately 300m south of the site, ditches, postholes and a cobbled surface were found 200m south-west (MLE9164). Romano-British period features were also found at the Coventry Road Iron Age settlement (MLE8919). No finds of Anglo-Saxon date have been made in the area, although the settlement of Hinckley is known have pre-conquest origins (Mills 2008, 12). Locally, Sketchley (MLE2847) is a medieval settlement with a 13th-century chapel (MLE2835). Ridge and furrow cultivation remains are known from the area (Butler 2009). The open fields are known to have been subject to enclosure in 1759 (Mills 2008, 12-13).

The Ashby de-la-Zouch canal was constructed in the early 18th century. Hinckley's hosiery industry developed during the post-medieval period and by the mid-18th century had become a local centre. The 19th century saw the construction of the London and Western Railway through Hinckley in 1864 and development of Hinckley Sewage Works to the south of Sketchley Brook (Mills 2008, 14).

Dye Works were erected adjacent to the west of the B4109 Rugby Road in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These expanded through the 1920s to form a large complex, now much demolished (Mills 2008, 15).

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned in 2009 by Under Construction Archaeology, on behalf of Goodman Logistic Development (UK) Ltd, to conduct field walking and geophysical surveys as part of a non-intrusive

archaeological evaluation of parts of the development area (Kajewski 2009 and Butler 2009).

The fieldwalking (c15ha) recovered a very low concentration of Roman and medieval pottery, with an increased number of manure scattered early post-medieval finds. Most (95%) of the pottery and other finds were dated to the 18th-20th centuries. This is consistent with the construction of the canal and railway line that borders the fields. Three fields, 19.9ha in area, were successfully surveyed by gradiometer, revealing a former landscape of enclosed ridge and furrow fields in the large western field. A small group of ditches and a pit detected may constitute evidence of earlier archaeology in that area. To the east a recreation ground was prospected revealing many modern features, but the survey also identified the likely route of the underground channelling of the Sketchley Brook to the north-east.

Subsequent trial excavation was undertaken in four fields (Foard Colby 2011). A small pit containing Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery was found in Trench 10, Area A. Adjacent to the pit was an undated, gully. A further small undated pit was also present in Trench 11 to the south. Five post-medieval boundary ditches were also present in Area A. The remains of a brick-built field barn were present in Trench 22.

In Area D the remains of a modern hearth lined with fire bricks was found in Trench 47. The hearth may date to an earlier stage of factory building (Foard Colby 2011).

4 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

The five trial trenches (50-54) were positioned to ensure a full coverage of the area, whilst also taking into account the previous evaluation trenches and known services (Fig 2). Each trench was located using a Leica System 1200 GPS operating to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m to Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum. The trenches were centred on a prehistoric pit located in Trench 10 of the evaluation (Fig 2). This involved the excavation of five 50m x 2m trenches and provided a 5% sample of the area surrounding this known archaeological site.

The trenches were excavated under continuous archaeological supervision and excavated to the first archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the upper interface of geological deposits. Topsoil was stored separately on either side of the trench, at least 1.0m from the trench edges. Trench numbering continued from the previous evaluation.

The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features, unless it was certain that there are no archaeological features or deposits present.

All trenches were planned at a suitable scale (1:100, 1:50 or 1:20). The heights of all deposits were established relative to Ordnance Datum.

All deposits encountered during the course of the investigation were fully recorded. Recording followed standard Northamptonshire procedures. All deposits were given individual context numbers and described on *pro-forma* context record sheets, to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation (NA 2006).

Had archaeological remains of greater significance been encountered, advice would have been sought from the Planning Archaeologists, Leicestershire County Council, and in consultation with the client, an appropriate methodology for dealing with the remains agreed.

A photographic record was kept of the excavation, comprising black and white negatives and colour slides with supporting digital photographs. The field data will be compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.

The excavated area and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval.

The trenches were backfilled with their up-cast, lightly compacted by the mechanical digger.

5 EXCAVATION RESULTS

The natural substrate at the far south-west corner, close to the Sketchley Brook, was a gravel river terrace mixed with bands of mid yellow-brown clay, and was encountered at 0.30m below the modern ground surface in all trenches.

No subsoil was present in any of the trenches. The fields had been deep ploughed resulting in the mixing up of both subsoil and topsoil, and plough scars were visible in the natural. The topsoil was dark greyish-brown slightly clayey loam and up to 0.30m deep.

The five trenches (50-54) were all 50m by 2m and were excavated in area A, around trench 10 from (the previous evaluation). The object was to see if any features could be found relating to the prehistoric pit that contained some middle Bronze Age/ Iron Age pottery and 7g of burnt bone. No archaeological features or deposits were present.

6 THE FINDS

No finds were recovered from the evaluation.

7 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features relating to the prehistoric pit was found in any of the trenches excavated in this evaluation. It would appear to have been an isolated feature with no other activity nearby. The linear gully observed in trench 10 in the previous excavation appeared to run in the direction of trench 51. The gully was not visible in trench 51; it is possible it did not continue or that it went between trenches 51 and 52 and possibly joined with the ditch in trench 9.

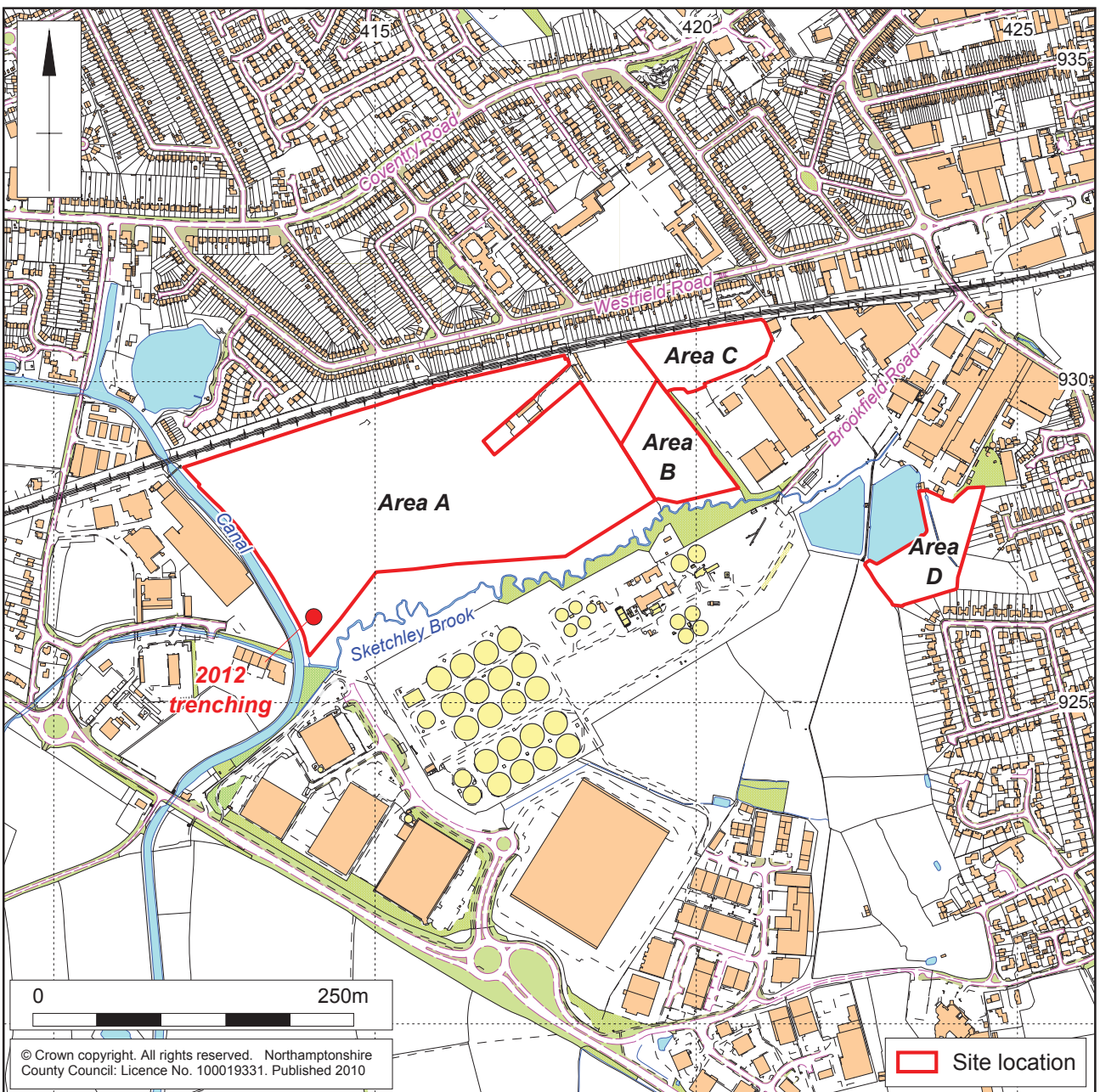
To the west of the evaluation the building of the Ashby de-la-Zouch canal could have destroyed any archaeological remains in the west side of Area A.

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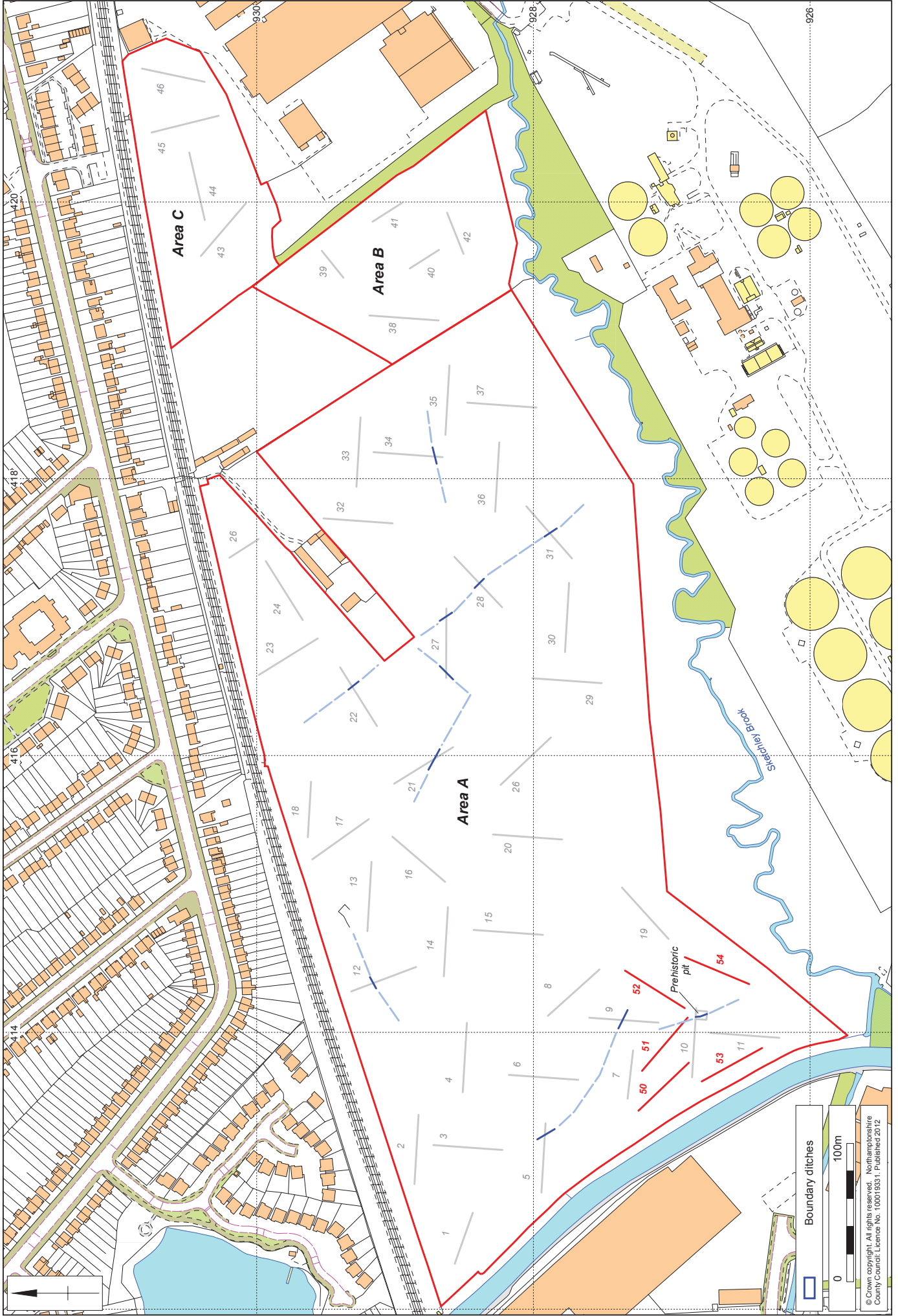
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT LIST

Context Number	Type	Brief description	Date
5001	Topsoil	Dark brown clay loam 0.30m deep	-
5002	Natural	Orange sand and gravels with clay bands	-
5101	Topsoil	Dark brown clay loam 0.18m thick	-
5102	Natural	Light brown clay	-
5103	Natural	Orange sand gravel	-
5201	Topsoil	Dark brown clay loam 0.16m deep	-
5202	Natural	Orange sand and gravels with clay bands	-
5203	Fill	Fill of 5204	Modern
5204	Cut	Land drain	Modern
5301	Topsoil	Dark brown clay loam 0.18m deep	-
5302	Natural	Orange sand and gravels with clay bands	-
5401	Topsoil	Dark brown clay loam 0.17m deep	-
5402	Natural	Orange sand and gravels with clay bands	-



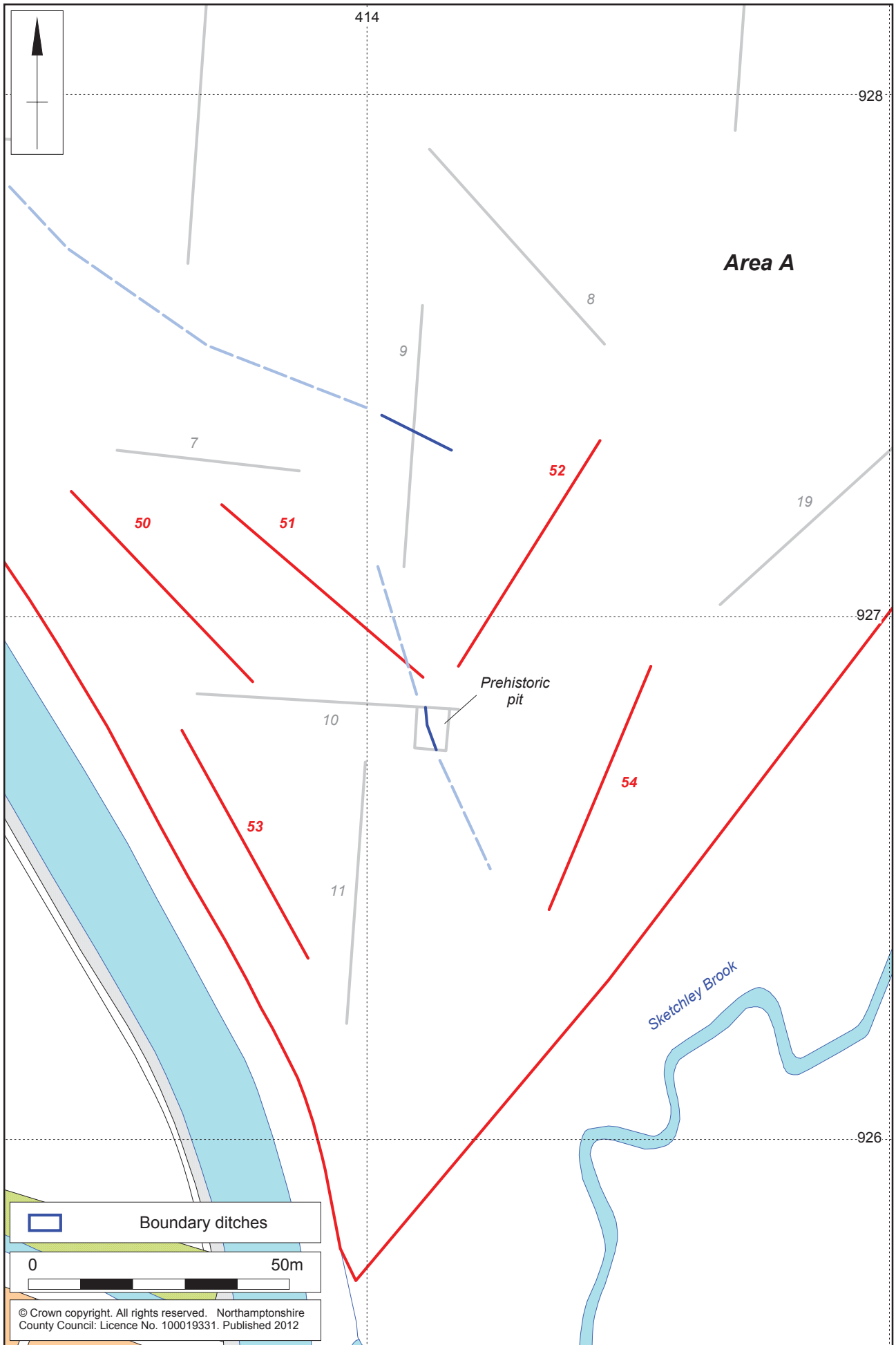
Scale 1:10,000

Areas of evaluation Fig 1



The 2012 trenches, showing previous trenching Fig 2

Scale 1:2,500 (A3)



Scale 1:1000 (A4)

The excavated trenches Fig 3



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