



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation
on land at 10 Pomfret Road, Towcester,
Northamptonshire
May 2012



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**Northamptonshire
County Council**

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Report 12/90
May 2012



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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	10 Pomfret Road, Towcester, Northamptonshire.	
Short description	An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken in May 2012 in advance of proposed residential development on land at 10 Pomfret Road, Towcester, Northamptonshire. Disturbed soils were present throughout the investigation area. No significant archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.	
Project type	Trial trench evaluation	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Domestic garden	
Future work	No	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Land at 10 Pomfret Road, Towcester, Northamptonshire	
Study area (metres sq)	144m	
OS Grid Ref	SP 69056 48611	
Height OD	c92m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	The Assistant Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J Leigh, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	Tuckley Chester Design Limited, Towcester	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	May 2012	
End date	May 2012	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		None
Paper	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Trial trench log forms (1) Colour slides (8) black and white contact prints (8) Digital photographs (21)
Digital	NA	Report text and figures
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	An archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at 10 Pomfret Road, Towcester, Northamptonshire	
Serial title & volume	12/90	
Author(s)	David J Leigh	
Page numbers	10	
Date	May 2012	

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALAUTION ON LAND
AT 10 POMFRET ROAD, TOWCESTER,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
MAY 2012**

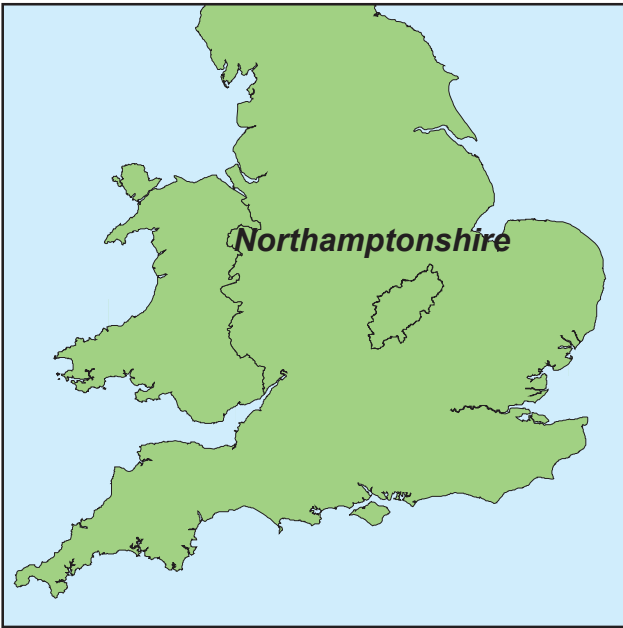
Abstract

In May 2012 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at 10 Pomfret Road, Towcester, Northamptonshire in advance of a proposed residential development. Disturbed soils were present throughout the investigation area. No significant archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

In May 2012 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in advance of proposed residential development on land at 10 Pomfret Road, Towcester, Northamptonshire (NGR SP: 69056 48611; Figs 1 and 2). The work was carried out on behalf of Tuckley Chester Design Ltd, Towcester and followed an approved Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Brown 2012) prepared in accordance with a two-part brief for archaeological investigation issued by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council on 26 April 2012 (NCC 2012 *a and b*). It adhered to the English Heritage procedural documents *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE; EH 2009) and *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA).

The trial trench evaluation comprised Stage I of the programme of archaeological investigation as set out in the brief for archaeological field evaluation (Mordue 2012*b*). The work was carried out in order to investigate and quantify the archaeological potential within the investigation area and provide information for further targeted investigation if required.



Scale 1:10,000

Site location Fig 1

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The investigation area lies within Towcester on the western side of Pomfret Road encompassing an area approximately 144m (sq). The site is located on relatively level ground at a height of c92m aOD.

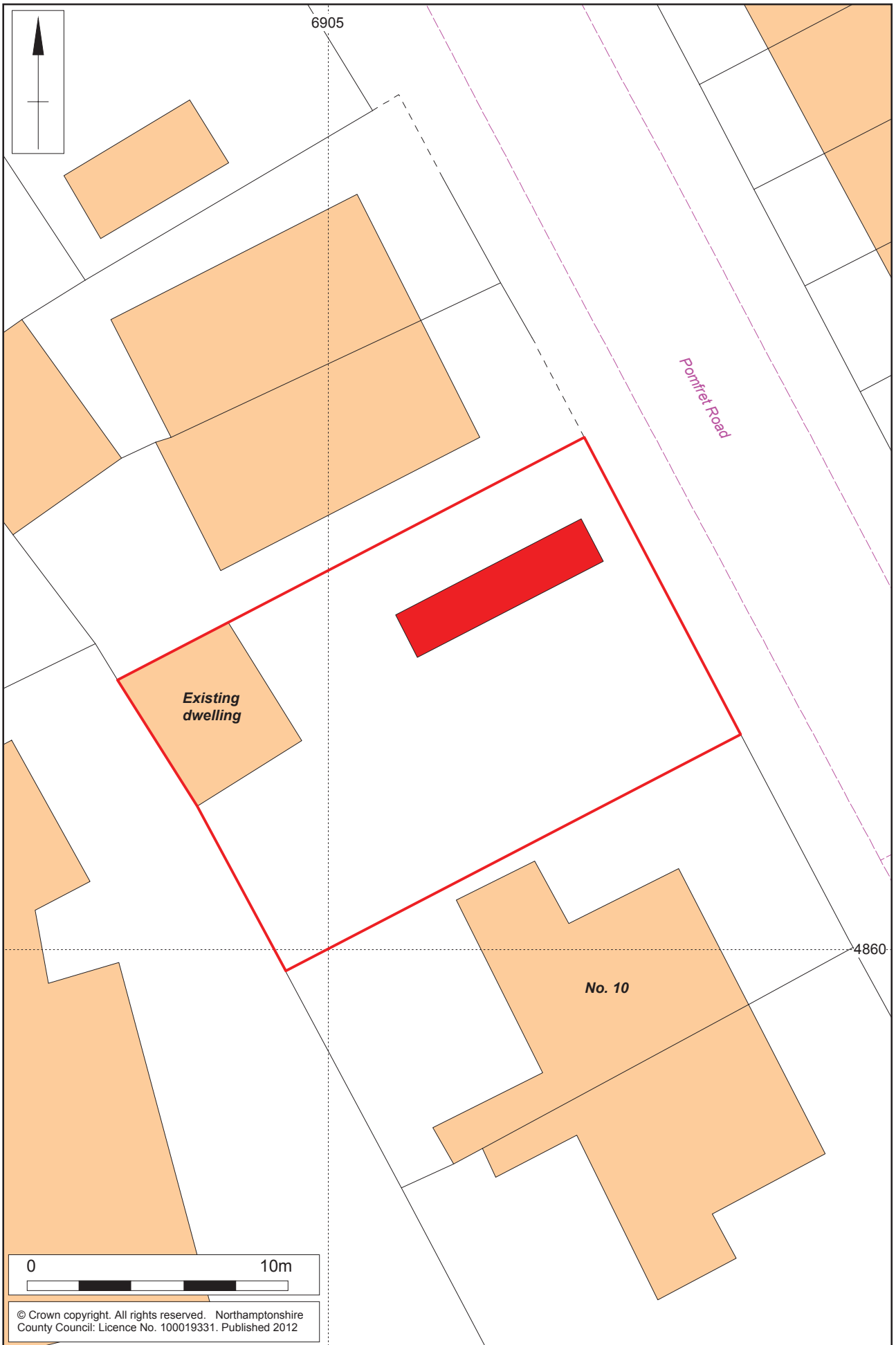
The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Upper Lias Clays (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex>).

2.2 Historical background

A pre-Roman settlement appears to have been located to the east of Watling Street but its full extent is uncertain (Brown and Soden 2007). The Roman town of *Lactodurum* (HER726) was sited on the Watling Street (A5), a major Roman route built between London and the legionary fortress at Wroxeter, near Shrewsbury. Another Roman road from Alchester joined Watling Street in the town. The site lies outside the projected line of the Roman town walls, the western side of which are thought to have been aligned along Queens Road. Extensive suburbs are known to have existed outside the walls, as ribbon development along the principal roads.

The town was re-fortified in the early 10th century as part of the re-conquest of the Danelaw, while in the medieval period, Towcester comprised a small town with a motte and bailey castle (Bury Mount, HER727/3; Brown and Soden 2008). The present site lies on the edge of the medieval core of the town and probably lay beyond the area of the medieval tenement rows of Park Street (Taylor *et al* 2002, HER727/48). Evidence suggests that medieval activity had mostly been confined to the Watling Street frontage (Steadman and Shaw 1991, 7-8, 10; Atkins and Woodfield 1999, 32; Prentice 2001, 13).

No previous archaeological work is recorded as having been carried out within investigation area. Up to the present development the site has comprised an area of domestic garden belonging to No 10 Pomfret Road.



Scale 1:200 (A4)

Location of the trial trench Fig 2

3 OBJECTIVES

The aims of the trial trench evaluation, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Brown 2012), were to:

- ◆ Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits exposed during the trial trench evaluation;
- ◆ Determine and record the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits and to retrieve all datable artefacts;
- ◆ Provide information as to the archaeological potential within the site, and to provide for further effective archaeological investigation either in advance of, or during early construction phases;
- ◆ Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.



The investigation area at the start of the evaluation, looking west Fig 3

3 THE TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

4.1 Methodology

The fieldwork comprised the excavation of a single 8m trial trench positioned in accordance with the trench plan approved by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council (Fig 2).

The trench was excavated using a 360° mini digger fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Topsoil and subsoil was removed to expose the upper surface of the natural substratum. Once opened, the trench was recorded in accordance with standard NA procedures (NA 2011).



General view of the trial trench, looking north-east Fig 4

A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology *pro-forma* sheets. The trial trench evaluation was carried out in accordance with the IfA's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008) and *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010).

4.2 The results

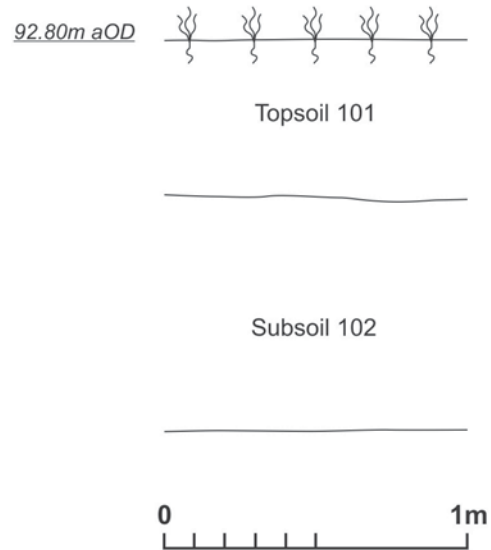
A single trench 8m in length and 1.8m wide, was excavated down to the upper surface of the natural substratum (Figs 4 and 5).

The natural substratum was encountered between 1.30m below present ground level and comprised grey-brown compact clay, containing occasional fragments of flint and irregular stones. This was overlain by mid to light brown silt loam subsoil, up to 0.80m thick, containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material and corroded fragments of modern constructional fittings along with small sherds of modern glass. This was sealed by grey-brown silt loam topsoil, up to 0.50m thick, containing occasional small fragments of modern ceramic building material and irregular stones.

No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present within the investigation area.



The stratigraphic sequence Fig 5



Representative section Fig 6

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

RECORD	NUMBER
Trial trench log forms	1
Colour slides	8
Black and white contacts and negatives	8
Digital photographs	21

The project archive will be held at Northamptonshire Archaeology until such time as a suitable depository has been appointed.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological investigation revealed disturbed soils throughout the investigation area. Frequent inclusions of modern constructional material contained within the subsoil suggest that the site has been subject to considerable modern disturbance probably associated with levelling up and landscaping activity within the area.

No archaeological deposits were present within the investigation area. The absence of any artefactual evidence would suggest that no significant archaeological deposits are present within the immediate vicinity of the investigation area.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR 69056 48611	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	8m x 1.8 N-S		92.80m aOD	1.30m, 91.5m aOD
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Topsoil	Grey-brown silt loam with occasional stone inclusions and fragments of modern ceramic building material	0.50 thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid – light brown silt loam with numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material and corroded metal constructional fittings	0.80m thick	-
103	Natural	Compact grey-brown clay with occasional fragments of flint and irregular stones	-	-



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