



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation  
on land at Springwell Lane, off Dog and Gun Lane  
Whetstone, Leicestershire  
November 2013



## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Northamptonshire  
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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>Oasis No. 166238</b>
Project title	An Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Springwell, Lane, off Dog and Gun Lane, Whetstone, Leicestershire, November 2013	
An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Springwell Lane, off Dog and Gun Lane, Whetstone, Leicestershire during November 2013. The work was undertaken in advance of residential development. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered during the course of the evaluation.		
Project type	Trial Trench Evaluation	
Site Status	None	
Previous work	Desk-Based Assessment (Rosenburg 2009) Geophysical Survey (Walker and Butler 2010)	
Current land use	Pasture and arable	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	None	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address	Land at Springwell Lane, off Dog and Gun Lane, Whetstone, Leicestershire	
Post code	LE8 6ZS	
OS co-ordinates	NGR SP 55859 95788	
Area (sq m/ha)	12ha	
Height aOD	75m	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Leicestershire County Council	
Project Design originator	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Supervisor	Ed Taylor, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	11/11/13	
End date	14/11/13	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Contents</b>
Physical	X.A166.2013	None
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)
Digital		Client report PDF; digital images
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	An Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Springwell, Lane, off Dog and Gun Lane, Whetstone, Leicestershire, November 2013	
Serial title & volume	13/231	
Author(s)	Ed Taylor	
Page numbers	16	
Date	10 December 2013	

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION  
ON LAND AT SPRINGWELL LANE OFF DOG AND GUN LANE  
WHETSTONE, LEICESTERSHIRE  
NOVEMBER 2013**

*Abstract*

*An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Springwell Lane, off Dog and Gun Lane, Whetstone, Leicestershire during November 2013. The work was undertaken in advance of residential development. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered during the course of the evaluation.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on approximately 12.26ha of land at Springwell Lane off Dog and Gun Lane, Whetstone, Leicestershire (Fig 1, NGR SP 55859 95788).

The work was carried out in advance of residential development and in response to a generic Brief issued by the Assistant Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council (LCC 2013). The investigation followed an approved specification prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Brown 2013) 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).

The evaluation comprised the excavation of thirteen trial trenches, each 50m long by 1.8m wide, within the main development area and three 30m long by 1.8m wide trenches excavated within the access road (Fig 2). Initially, a further five trenches were to be excavated in the southern field but this area was subsequently removed from the development plan.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Topography and geology**

The historic core of Whetstone is located over 1.5km to the north of the site, which is actually closer to Cosby in the neighbouring parish. The development forms part of continued expansion in the sub-urban fringe of Leicester. The proposed development occupies c12.26ha of arable land, although the eastern extent of this will be green space, whilst only the western extent will be residential housing. The site is bounded to the west by Springwell Lane, to the north by residential housing off Dog & Gun Lane, to the east by Whetstone Brook, and to the south by arable fields. The land lies on the lower slopes of a tributary valley, c73-76m above Ordnance Datum, sloping down towards the brook.

According to the solid geology map of Southern England the site is Triassic (Mercia) mudstone (BGS 2001). However, the local drift geology of the area is likely to be mixed comprising clay till, sand and gravels and in the flood plain areas this is overlain by alluvium. The soils are of Beccles 3 (711t) association and comprise slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy soils over chalky clay till.

## 2.2 Archaeological and historical background

A desk-based assessment and geophysical survey were previously conducted for the development site (Rosenburg 2009; Walker and Butler 2010). The desk-based assessment indicated finds within the vicinity, but nothing within the site. The geophysical survey identified ridge and furrow cultivation, but no other archaeological features were apparent.

A brief overview of heritage assets mentioned in the desk-based assessment are summarised here:

### ***Prehistoric***

Flint implements have been recovered near to Whetstone Lodge to the south (MLE15917). A sub-circular enclosure cropmark has been identified to the east near Countesthorpe (MLE29). A possible ring ditch is also indicated c1km south-east of the site (MLE373). Geophysical surveys in nearby parishes to the west and north have also identified features, that are as yet undated (MLE 16926; 16927; 17023).

### ***Late Iron Age to Roman***

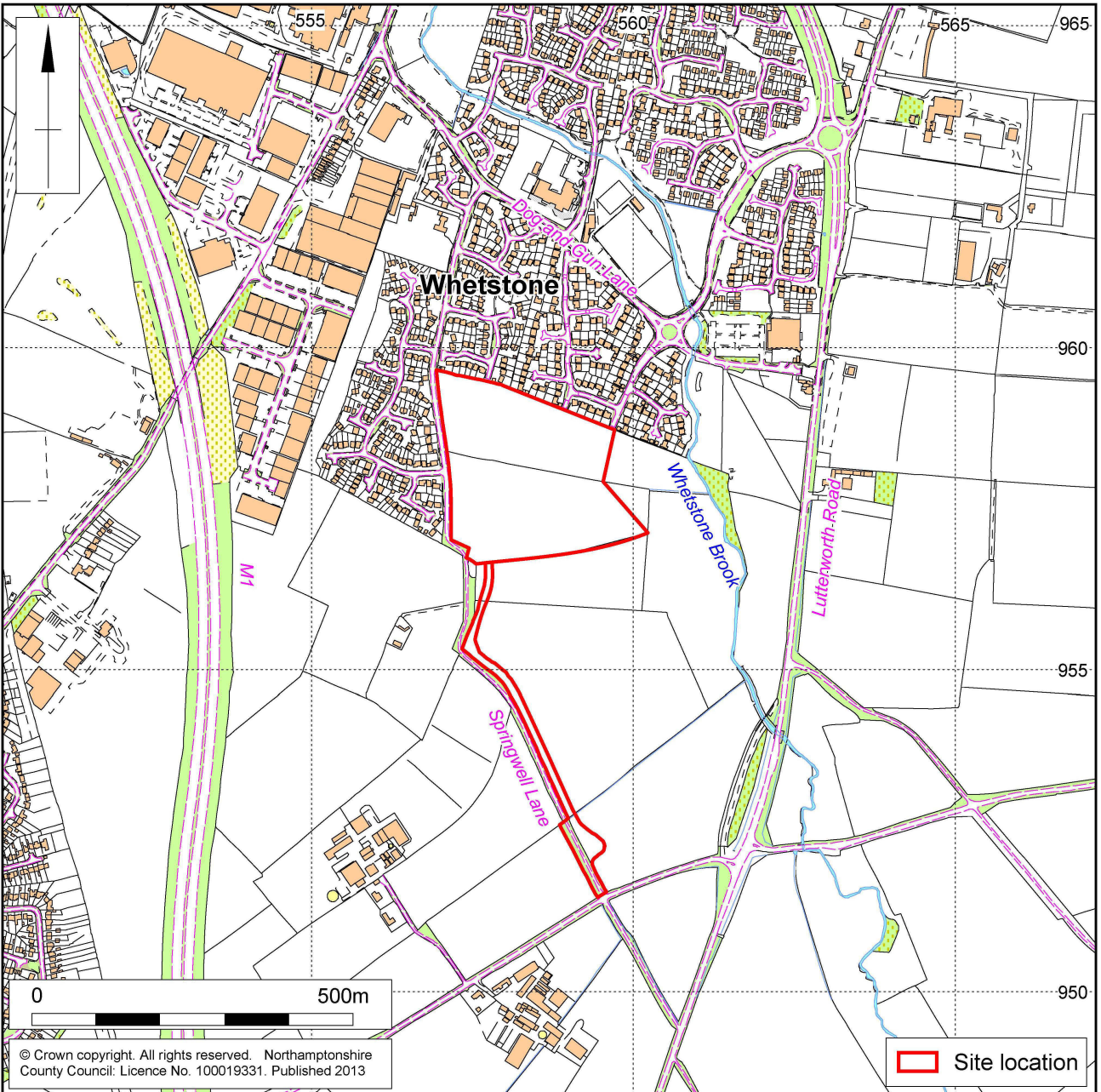
Two separate late Iron Age quern fragments were recovered to the west of Whetstone and Cosby (MLE6568; 6574). The present A426 to the east of the site is thought to have been a Roman road between *Ratae* and *Tripontium* (MLE1902). Pottery has been recovered during fieldwalking at Whetstone Grange (MLE15918).

### ***Saxo-Norman and medieval***

Early medieval pottery has been recovered at Whetstone Lodge (MLE15919). The placename, Whetstone, is thought to derive from West-ton, referring to a farm or hamlet. The settlement is registered by Domesday Book, 1086. The land was substantial, c1800 acres and included a mill which, at the Conquest, had been worth 35s and was worth 60s by 1086. The manors of Whetstone were profitable, and the inclusion of a knight, listed within Ralph's demesne, suggested more than one manor within the parish. Ridge and furrow is clearly indicated across the proposed development by geophysical survey, but is a fair distance from the manorial centre (Walker and Butler 2010). Aerial photographs indicate two converging systems of ridge and furrow, with one alignment replacing another and suggesting reorganisation in the open fields (Rosenburg 2009, 11-12).

### ***Post-medieval***

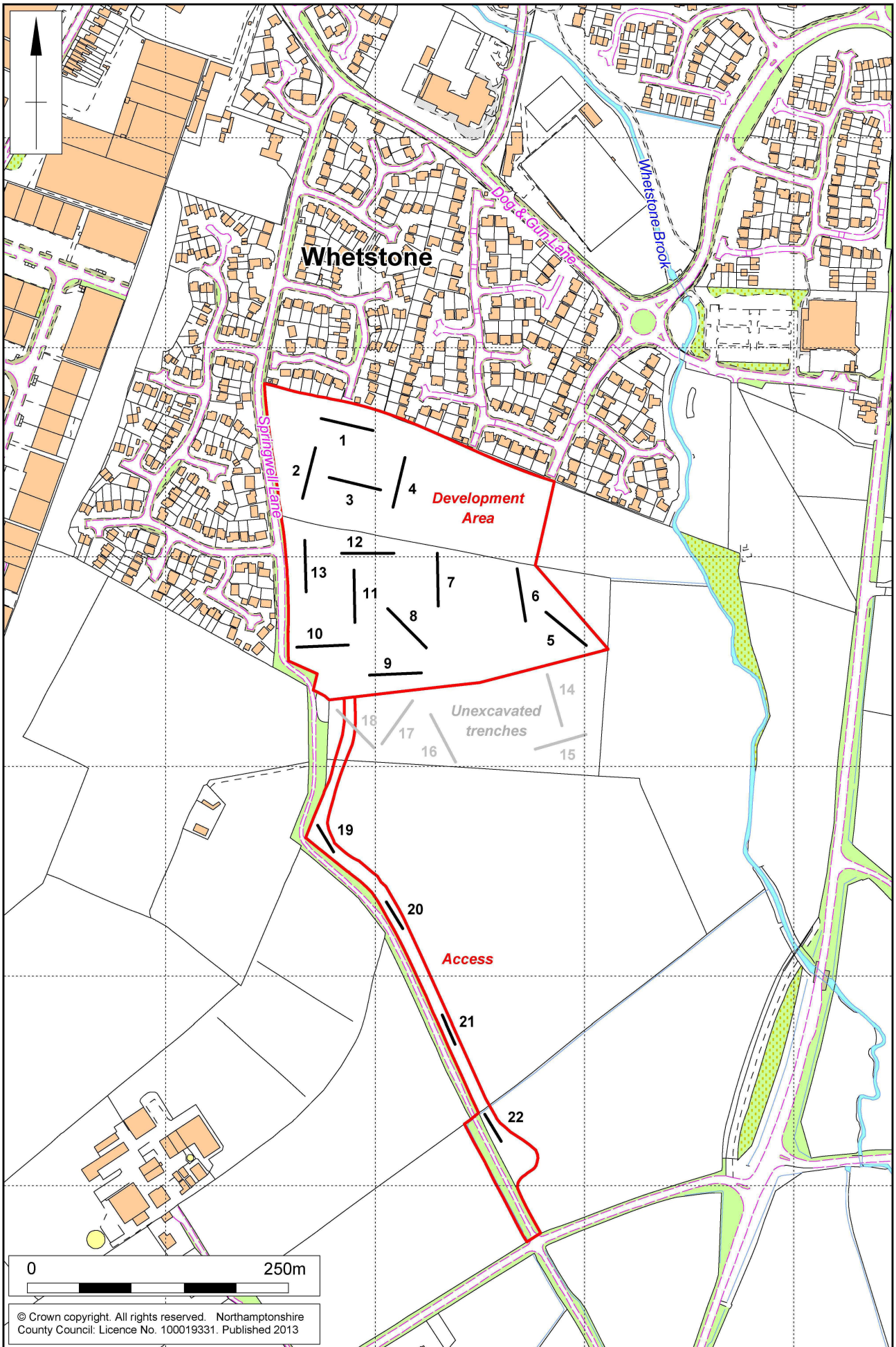
The open fields were enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1764, the map is held in the record office but was not available for consultation at the time of the desk-based assessment (Rosenburg 2009, 12; map QS 79/6/5-11). An early map by Cary in 1792 indicates that a track crossed the site from north-west to south-east and may have forded the brook where a pronounced hollow allows access for a crossing. The 1886 Ordnance Survey map depicts a well on the west side of Springwell Lane opposite the south-west corner of the site, on the 1904 Ordnance Survey map this is depicted on the east side, at the edge of the site. The well is not depicted on the 1958 Ordnance Survey edition and several boundaries had been lost. After 1967 one of the field boundaries became a substantial drain and the eastern extent of the site became a single field.



Scale 1:10,000

Site Location Fig 1





Scale 1: 5000 (A4)

The excavated trenches Fig 2

### 3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of trial trench evaluation was to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character and date, state of preservation and depth of burial for important archaeological remains within the application area.

Specifically this would:

- establish whether any archaeological deposit exists in the area with particular regard to any which merit preservation *in situ*;
- identify the date, form and function of any archaeological deposit, together with its extent, depth and quality of preservation;
- evaluate the likely impact of past land use and possible presence of masking colluvial or alluvial deposits;
- establish the potential for the survival of environmental evidence. Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practises, timetables and overheads.

The trenches were positioned using a Leica System 1200 GPS and were excavated, under continuous archaeological supervision, using 180° and 360° mechanical excavators fitted with flat toothless ditching buckets. 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* (2011). Trenches containing possible archaeological remains were cleaned by hand, sufficient enough to define the features. Each feature or deposit was given a unique number consisting of the trench number and an individual context number (eg 402, Trench 4, context 2). The details of each context were recorded on pro-forma sheets. The trenches were planned (scale 1:50) and section drawings were made at an appropriate scale (1:10 or 1:20) where necessary. Levels, which were related to Ordnance Datum, were taken on the trenches at appropriate points, on section datum and on all major features. Trench locations were related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record was made of the excavation, using 35mm black and white negative film supplemented by digital images.

The spoil heaps and features were scanned with a metal detector to ensure maximum finds retrieval. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC 1992).

All works were carried out in accordance with the WSI 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).

The evaluation was carried out within the parameters of the regional research objectives (Cooper 2006; Knight *et al* 2012).





Trench 4, looking south-east

Fig 3



Trench 5, looking south-east

Fig 4

#### **4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE**

The natural substrate varied across the site from dark orange-yellow clay till to pale grey and orange mottled fine sand which was encountered at depths between 0.35m and 0.70m below current ground level.

Mid to dark grey-brown sandy clay loam subsoil, 0.10m-0.35m thick overlay the natural substrate. This was overlain by a dark grey-brown sandy loam topsoil, 0.10m-0.35m thick.

No archaeological remains or artefacts were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

#### **5 CONCLUSIONS**

No archaeological remains were encountered during the course of the evaluation. It would seem likely that the site has remained in agricultural use since the medieval period and probably earlier.

There was no evidence of the north-east to south-west aligned ridge and furrow identified by the desk-based assessment (Rosenburg 2009) and the geophysical survey (Walker and Butler 2010) to the east and south of the evaluation area, suggesting it has been removed by later agricultural activity

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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**APPENDIX: CONTEXT INDEX BY TRENCH**

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
1	50m x 1.8m	455773/295926	74.6m aOD	0.49m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.31m-0.33m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.18m-0.25m thick	-
103	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
2	50m x 1.8m	455736/295880	75m aOD	0.42m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.32-0.34m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.10m thick	-
203	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
3	50m x 1.8m	455781/295880	75m aOD	0.59.m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.31-0.33m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.28m-0.32m thick	-
303	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
4	50m x 1.8m	455821/295871	74m aOD	0.46m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
401	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.31m-0.35m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.15m-0.27m thick	-
403	Natural	Pale grey and orange mottled fine sand	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
5	50m x 1.8m NW-SE	455983/295730	71.5m aOD	0.40m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
501	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.16m-19m thick	-
502	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.24m-0.30m thick	-
503	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
6	50m x 1.8m	455940/295778	72m aOD	0.45m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
601	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.30m-0.32m thick	-
602	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.15m-0.30 thick	-
603	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
7	50m x 1.8m	455858/295778	73m aOD	0.46m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
701	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.31m-0.32m thick	-
702	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.15m-0.21m thick	-
703	Natural	Pale grey and orange mottled fine sand	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
8	50m x 1.8m	455831/295687	72m aOD	0.43m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
801	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.30-0.32m thick	-
802	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.13m-0.17m thick	-
803	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
9	50m x 1.8m	455817/295687	72m aOD	0.47m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
901	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.31m thick	-
902	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.16m thick	-
903	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
10	50m x 1.8m	455749/295714	75m aOD	0.52m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1001	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.24-0.40m thick	-
1002	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.28m-0.25m thick	-
1003	Natural	Pale grey and orange mottled fine sand	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
11	50m x 1.8m	455780/295761	74m aOD	0.45m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.29m-0.32m thick	-
1102	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.16m-0.21m thick	-
1103	Natural	Pale grey and orange mottled fine sand	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
12	50m x 1.8m	455792/295803	74m aOD	0.35m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.10m-14m thick	-
1202	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.15m-0.27m thick	-
1203	Natural	Pale grey and orange mottled fine sand	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
13	50m x 1.8m	455732/295790	75m aOD	0.30m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.10m-0.11m thick	-
1302	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.20m-0.28m thick	-
1303	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
19	30m x 1.8m	455752/295531	75m aOD	0.50m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1901	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.30m thick	-
1902	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.20m thick	-
1903	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
20	30m x 1.8m	455817/295458	75m aOD	0.50m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
2001	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.30m thick	-
2002	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.20 m thick	-
2003	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth of natural below ground level
21	30m x 1.8m	455869/295347	75m aOD	0.50m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
2101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.20m thick	-
2102	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.30m thick	-
2103	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height</b>	<b>Depth of natural below ground level</b>
22	30m x 1.8m	455912/295255	75m aOD	0.60m
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
2201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional small stone inclusions	0.20m-0.30m thick	-
2202	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay loam	0.40m thick	-
2203	Natural	Dark orange-yellow clay with occasional gravel inclusions	-	-



Northamptonshire County Council

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