



**Northamptonshire
County Council**

Northamptonshire Archaeology

**Archaeological Evaluation
on land to the rear of
24-26 Langton Road, Great Bowden,
Leicestershire
July 2005**



Mo Jones

July 2005

Report 05/110

Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE

w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk

t. 01604 700493/4

f. 01604 702822

e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk



STAFF

Project Manager	Andy Mudd BA, Cert Arch Oxon
Fieldwork Supervisor and Text	Mo Jones BA, PIFA
Fieldwork	Mo Jones David Haynes
Illustrations	LeeAnne Whitelaw BSc
Pottery	Iain Soden BA
Fired clay	Pat Chapman BA, PIFA
Environmental finds	Karen Deighton MSc
Animal bone	Karen Deighton

QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	P Chapman		
Verified by	A Mudd		
Approved by	S Parry		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Archaeological Evaluation on Land to the Rear of 24-26 Langton Road, Great Bowden, Leicestershire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of the developer, Grace Homes, to carry out an archaeological trial excavation on land to the rear of 24-26 Langton Road, Great Bowden, Leicestershire. Two trenches were excavated. Trench 1 was located in the north field and contained one ditch and two gullies. Trench 2 was located in the south field and contained two small pits. Pottery recovered from two features suggests that they date to the 10 th to 11 th centuries. Results indicate the land, which lies close to the historic core of Great Bowden, was under agricultural use during the medieval and later periods.	
Project type (eg desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Trial trench evaluation	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)		
Future work (yes, no, unknown)		
Monument type and period		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	Saxo-Norman pottery	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Leicestershire	
Site address (including postcode)	24-26 Langton Road, Great Bowden, Nr. Market Harborough, Leicestershire	
Easting (use numeric 100km grid square no.)	4745	
Northing	2889	
Height OD	81m OD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology/ CgMs Consulting	
Project brief originator	Leicestershire CC Heritage Services	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Mo Jones	
Project Manager	Andy Mudd for NA/ Mike Dawson for CgMs	
Sponsor or funding body	Grace Homes	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	11 th July 2005	
End date	12 th July 2005	
ARCHIVES		
Physical	Pottery, bone, quern stone	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc) 2 bags pottery; 2 bags animal bone; 1 bag fired clay
Paper	Contexts, registers Plans, sections	1 file 1 plan sheet; 1 section sheet
Digital	Report, illustrations	Evaluation report & illustrations

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ON LAND TO THE REAR OF 24-26 LANGTON ROAD, GREAT BOWDEN, LEICESTERSHIRE
JULY 2005**

ABSTRACT

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of the developer, Grace Homes, to carry out an archaeological trial excavation on land to the rear of 24-26 Langton Road, Great Bowden, Leicestershire. Two trenches were excavated. Trench 1 was located in the north field and contained one ditch and two gullies. Trench 2 was located in the south field and contained two small pits. Pottery recovered from both trenches is Saxo-Norman in date and suggests occupation of the 10th-11th centuries close by. Archaeological features indicate the land, which lies close to the historic core of Great Bowden, has been under agricultural use during the medieval and later periods.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of the developer Grace Homes to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land to the rear of 24-26 Langton Road, Great Bowden, Leicestershire, ahead of proposed residential development (Planning Application Number: 03/01681/OUT; NGR SP745889; Fig 1).

The work conformed to a Specification prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology and approved by Richard Clark, the Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services. The work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct (IFA 1997), *Standard and Guideline for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (IFA 1999 revision), English Heritage's procedural document *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP 2, 1991) and the *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS 1997).

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Topography

The site lies in the northern part of the village of Great Bowden, Leicestershire, towards the margin of the historic core of the settlement. It lies at a height of 81m OD and occupies about 0.42ha in an irregular block of land between Langton Road and Sutton Road to the rear of nos 24 and 26 Langton Road and consists of two separate areas, both disused and overgrown at the time of fieldwork. The northern area used to be a paddock whilst the southern area was a garden,

although it has been neglected for at least thirty years. Access to the site as a whole was only possible from Sutton Road where an archway restricted the headroom of vehicles and plant (cover plate).

Geology

Great Bowden is situated in the upper reaches of the Welland valley. The underlying geology consists of Jurassic and Cretaceous middle and lower lias clays upon which the poorly drained Denchworth soils have developed (SSEW 1983; British Geological Survey 1960, Sheet 170).

3 TRIAL TRENCHING OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Objectives

The objective of the evaluation was to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area by:

- determining and recording the presence, date, character, integrity, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits
- putting any archaeological remains in their local and regional context
- as far as possible, based on current proposals, determining the likely impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains in order to inform the planning process

Methodology

The evaluation comprised two non-specifically targeted trenches, both measuring 1.8m by 23m (representing 2% of the 0.42ha site). Overburden was removed under archaeological supervision by a JCB 2CX mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.0 m toothless ditching bucket. Deposits were removed in spits to reveal the surface of any significant archaeological deposits, or, where these were absent, the natural geology.

All significant archaeological deposits were excavated by hand and recorded using Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma record sheets.

Both trenches were planned at a scale of 1:50 and appropriate sections drawn at 1:10 (Figs 3 and 4). All levels were related to Ordnance Datum. A photographic record was kept in both black and white prints and colour slides.

The site's palaeo-environmental potential was discussed with the Project Manager and one 20l sample was taken (from (107)) to characterise the survival of plant remains/charred plant remains, molluscs, pollen and small faunal remains and also for artefact retrieval.

On completion of the work the trenches were backfilled and lightly compacted to restore the surface.

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

Both trenches revealed a low density of archaeological features. A summary of the deposits and features found and maximum depth of all deposits is listed in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 (Figs 2 & 3) was located centrally in the northern field and orientated N-S. It contained two ditches, two gullies, a natural feature, a modern water pipe and electricity cable and two 0.10m diameter field drains.

The natural substrate was encountered at a depth of 0.85m and consisted of mid greyish yellow clay. Cutting this was ditch [108] (Fig 4, Section 2; Plate 1). It was orientated east to west and had a rounded, stepped profile with a concave base. It measured 1.7m wide and 0.5m deep and had a single fill (107) of dark brownish grey silty clay with large fragments of ironstone. Saxo-Norman pottery and animal bone were recovered from this deposit.

Feature (111) was an unexcavated undated ditch, orientated north-west to south-east, partially obscured by the subsoil left *in situ* around an electricity cable. A small sample of possible brick-fragments was taken in order to procure a date.

Gullies [106] and [110] (Fig 4, Sections 1 & 3) were undated and had similar shallow, rounded profiles. Gully [106] was orientated north-west to south-east and measured 0.69m wide by 0.16m deep. It was filled by dark brown silty clay (105). Gully [110] was orientated east to west and measured 0.63m wide by 0.11m deep. It was filled by mid greyish brown clay with orange mottling (109).

All features were sealed by subsoil (103), mid greyish yellow clay, a thin, continuous/consistent deposit of post-medieval ash and rubble debris (102), and dark brown loamy clay topsoil (101) (Fig 4, Section 2).

Trench 1 also contained a water pipe and live electricity cable running from south-east to north-west at a depth of approximately 0.6m and approximately 6.5m from the north end of the trench. These serve the now disused outbuildings in the field.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was relocated 5m towards the west boundary of the southern field due to the presence of dense medium-sized fruit trees, but retained its east to west orientation. Three features were revealed near the centre of the trench and consisted of two pits/postholes and a natural feature (Figs 2 & 3).

The natural geology was light yellowish brown clay (203) and encountered at a depth of 0.72m. Cutting this was undated pit [205] (Fig 4, Section 4), a small oval feature with gently sloping sides and a fairly even base. It measured 0.4m wide, 1m long and 0.1m deep and was filled by mid greyish brown silty clay (204). Pit [207] (Fig 4, Section 5; Plate 2) was also small and oval. It has steeply sloping sides and a mainly flat base and measured 0.7m wide and 0.19m deep. Its full length is unknown as it lies partially beyond the edge of the trench. Pottery fragments recovered from this feature suggest a Saxo-Norman date.

The features were overlain by subsoil (202), light yellowish brown silty clay with topsoil (201) mixed in due to frequent root activity. Topsoil (201) was a dark grey brown silty clay loam. The ash and rubble deposit (102) identified in Trench 1 was not present here (Fig 4, Section 2).

5 THE FINDS

Medieval Pottery *by Iain Soden*

The site produced only six sherds of pottery, but nonetheless significant for the small size of the assemblage. The fabric nomenclature and coding has been taken from the published concordance by Davies and Sawday in the Causeway Lane, Leicester report (Leicester Archaeology Monograph 5). This was kindly provided by Richard Buckley of the University of Leicester Archaeology Service.

The types present are as follows:

Context 107, Ditch [108]

1 sherd of St Neots-type Ware (Fabric SN), dating to c850-1100

1 sherd of Stamford Ware (Fabric ST3), dating to c900-1050

Context 206, Pit [207]

2 sherds of shelly St Neots-type Ware (Fabric SN), dating to c850-1100

2 sherds of Stamford Ware (Fabric ST2), dating to c1050-12th century, one glazed.

Although three sherds are rim-sherds, none is remarkable and nothing can be said about the forms represented. Abrasion is evident on the sherds from (107), but not those from (206).

Such small assemblages are not unusual from evaluations. However, they are rarely so consistent, deriving from such a small date range. It seems plausible to deduce from this pottery that a focus of Saxo-Norman occupation lies close by the site.

The fired clay by *Pat Chapman*

Three amorphous lumps (22g) of fired clay were recovered from context (111) in Trench 1. One side of each piece contains impressions of vegetation (perhaps straw or grass). It is possible that they derived from an oven or similar structure, but this is uncertain. It is not possible to date the pieces.

6 FAUNAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Animal bone by *Karen Deighton*

Four fragments of animal bone were recovered from fill (107) of Ditch [108]. These were a cattle (Bos) metatarsal shaft which had been split laterally into two pieces, a cattle mandibular hinge and a small indeterminate fragment of bone. The metatarsal exhibited evidence of canid gnawing at both ends of the diaphysis; otherwise the bone surfaces were in good condition. Knife marks consistent with the removal of the tongue were noted on the mandibular hinge.

Charred plant remains by *Karen Deighton*

Method

A twenty litre sample was collected by hand from fill (107), Ditch [108]. The sample was processed using a Siraf tank fitted with a 500 micron mesh and flot sieve. The resulting flot and residues were dried and examined with a microscope (10x magnification).

Results

Plant remains were preserved by charring only. Most grains and seeds showed some fragmentation and abrasion. Approximately 50% of the material recovered could be identified.

Approximately 50 cereal type grains were recovered; these were largely wheat/barley (*Triticum/Hordeum*) type and included naked barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) and possible spelt (*Triticum cf spelta*). No chaff fragments were recovered. Wild/weed taxa included *Chenopodium album* (fat hen) a ubiquitous weed of crops, disturbed sites and settlements.

Conclusion

With only one sample all that can be said of the arable economy of the site is that cereals including naked barley and possibly spelt were utilised. The reasonably good preservation and abundance of the remains suggests that the potential for examining this topic of research, if further excavation is undertaken, is fairly high.

7 DISCUSSION

The evaluation suggests the development area contains a low density of archaeological features. A small quantity of pottery suggests that at least some are dated to the 10th-11th centuries (Saxo-Norman period). One of the features containing pottery, Ditch [108] in Trench 1, is likely to represent a field or enclosure boundary. It is on the same alignment as the current boundaries, perhaps indicating that the land was divided into smaller areas in the early medieval period. Pits [205] and [207] in Trench 2 are possibly of a similar date, although only [207] produced any artefacts. It is uncertain how the pits should be interpreted, they may be associated with a structure, but equally they may be non-archaeological (eg root) hollows containing, by chance, a few sherds of pottery. The smaller gullies [106] and [110] in Trench 1 may also represent boundary features although their date is unknown. The fired clay from (111) is undated, although it is not obviously more recent than the Saxo-Norman pottery from the site, and since the deposit was sealed by subsoil, it does not appear to be modern.

Overall, the development area contains a sparse scatter of features indicating that it has never been intensely occupied, although it is possible that late Saxon occupation may be near the site. The concentration of charred cereal grains from Ditch 108 suggests domestic activity nearby, and if the fired clay is of a similar date this may be further evidence of domestic 'backyard' activities. This may indicate an expansion of the village core in the late Saxon period, which shortly afterwards returned to open ground, a pattern noted elsewhere in the region (Parry, in press).

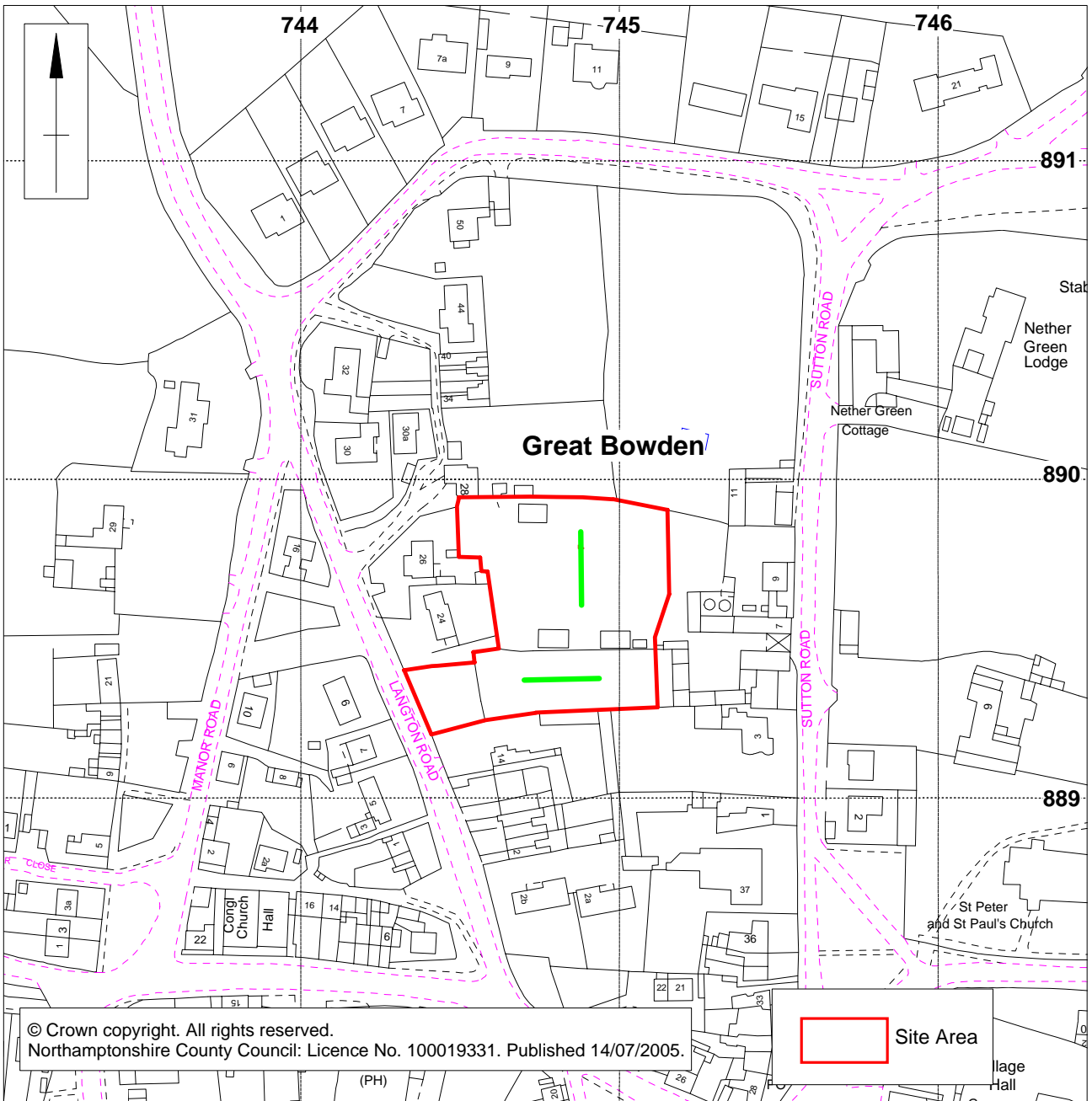
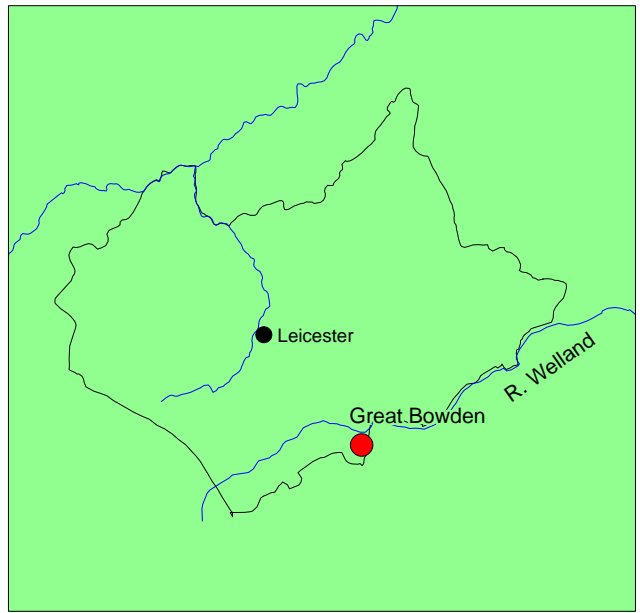
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Appendix A1

Context Database

Trench Number	Deposit	Context number	Description	Max Depth (m)	Interpretation	Artefacts
1	Layer	101	Dark brown loamy clay	0.30	Topsoil	
	Layer	102	Dark brown loamy clay	0.05	Post-medieval burnt debris	
	Layer	103	Mid brownish grey silty clay	0.50	Subsoil	
	Layer	104	Mid greyish yellow clay		Natural substrate	
	Fill	105	Dark brown silty clay	0.16	Fill of [106]	
	Cut	106	Filled by (105). Narrow with gently sloping sides, approximately 20° with a concave base which slopes gently to the north	0.16	Gully	
	Fill	107	Dark brownish grey silty clay with occasional large ironstone fragments	0.50	Fill of [108]	Pottery and animal bone
	Cut	108	Filled by (107). Gently stepped sides with a rounded profile and concave base	0.50	Ditch	
	Fill	109	Mid greyish brown clay with orange mottling	0.11	Fill of [110]	
	Cut	110	Narrow and shallow with gentle, concave sides, approximately 25°. Shallow, concave base	0.11	Gully	
	Feature Number	111	Partially exposed linear feature – unexcavated		undated ?ditch	Burnt clay fragments
2	Layer	201	Dark grey silty clay with loam	0.35	Topsoil	
	Layer	202	Light yellowish brown silty clay with topsoil mixed in due to root activity	0.37	Subsoil	
	Layer	203	Light yellowish brown clay	0	Natural substrate	
	Fill	204	Mid greyish brown silty clay	0.10	Fill of [205]	
	Cut	205	Filled by (204). Oval with gently sloping sides with a mainly flat base	0.10	Pit	
	Fill	206	Mid yellowish grey silty clay mixed with 5% light yellowish silty clay	0.19	Fill of [207]	Pottery
	Cut	207	Filled by (206). Oval with steep sides and a mainly flat base	0.19	Pit	



1:2000

Fig 1

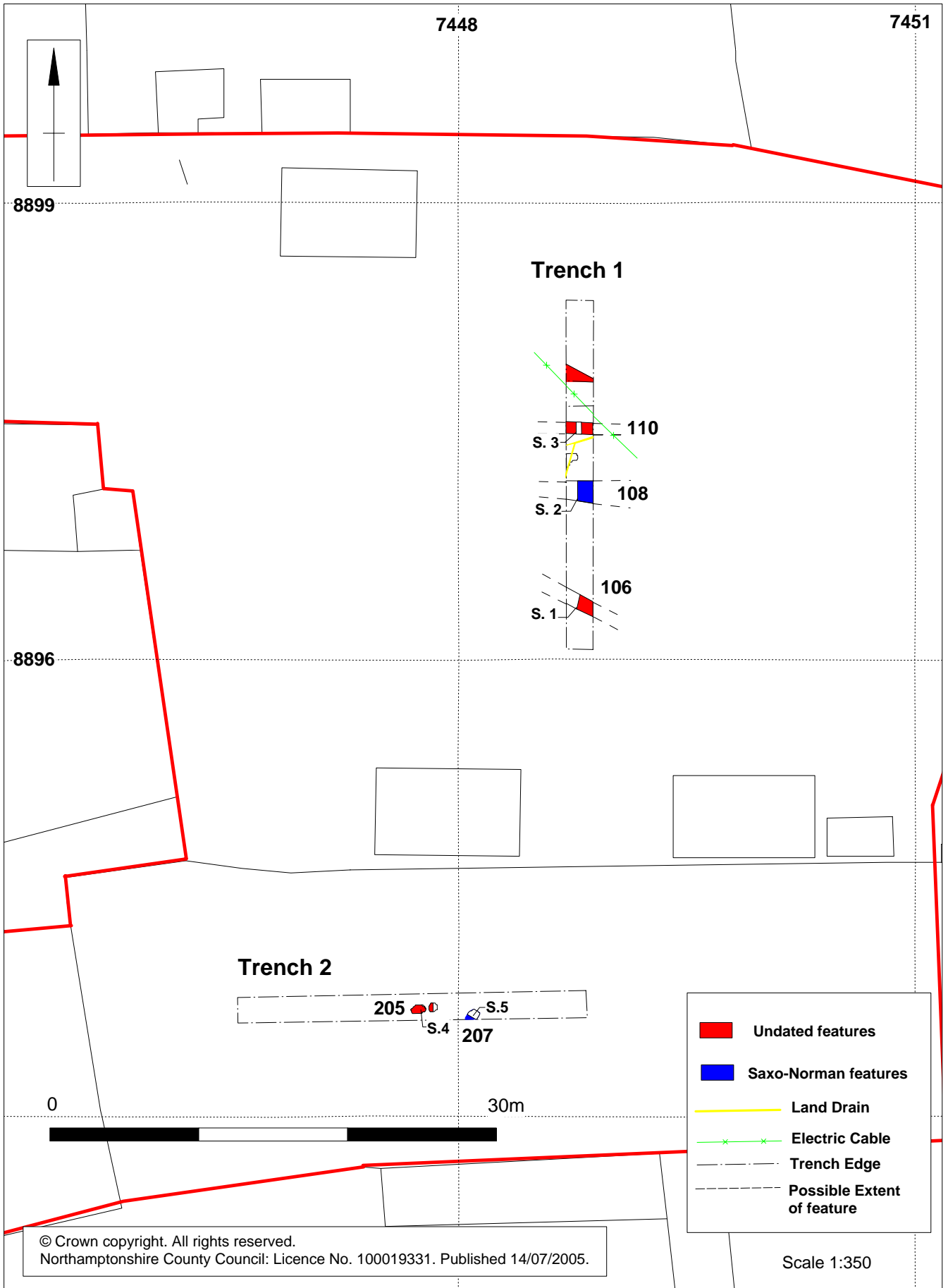
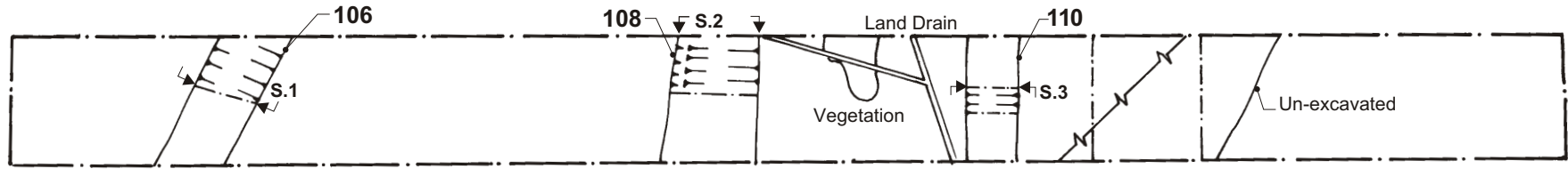


Fig. 2

Trench 1



Trench 2

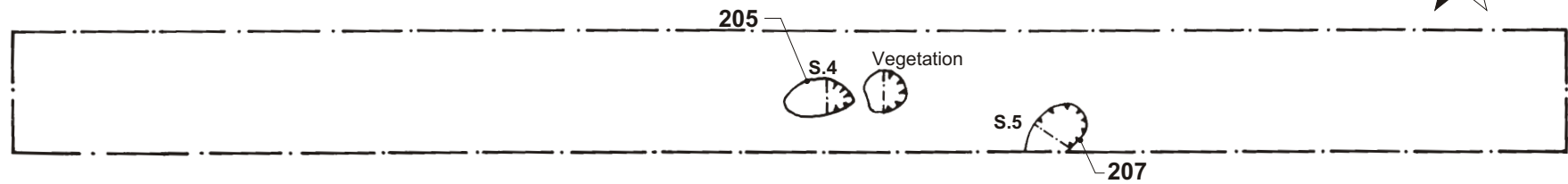
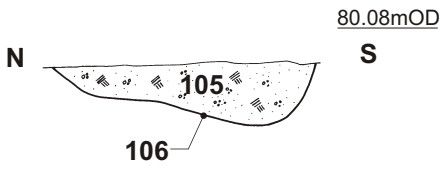


Fig. 3 Plans: Trenches 1 and 2

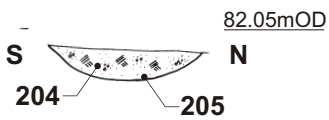
Section 1- Trench 1



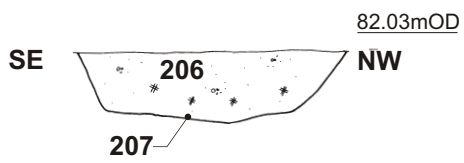
Section 3 - Trench 1



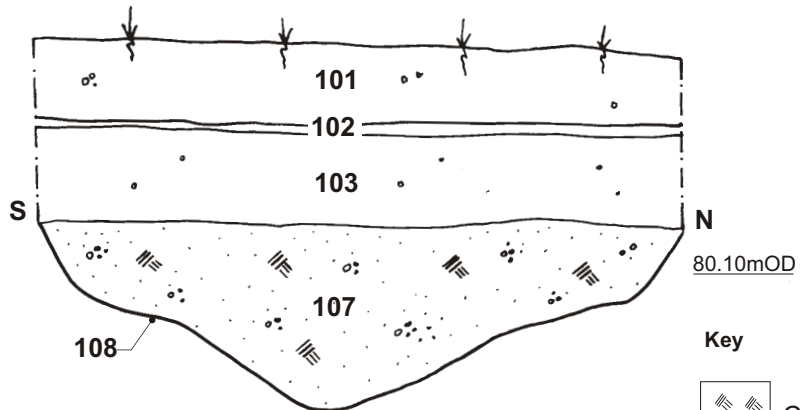
Section 4 - Trench 2



Section 5 - Trench 2



Section 2- Trench 1



Key



Clay



Charcoal



Silt



Fig. 4



Plate 1: Ditch 108

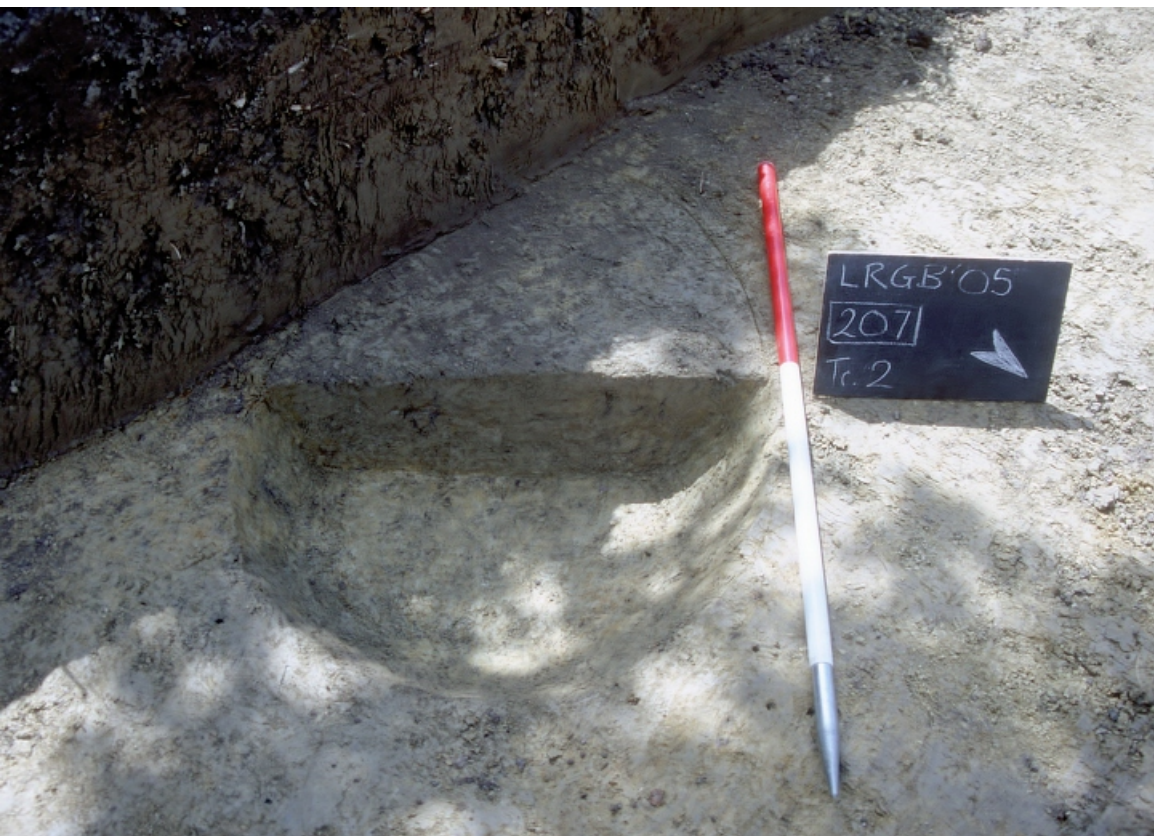


Plate 2: Pit 207