

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief
during infra-structure works on land at
Middlemore Farm, Daventry,
Northamptonshire



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August 2006

Report 06/123

Northamptonshire Archaeology

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief during Phase II of Infrastructure Works on land at Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during Phase II of Infrastructure Works on land at Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire. An undisturbed stratigraphy was noted across all of the development area, no archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.	
Project type	Watching brief	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Watching briefs undertaken in 2005 and 2006	
Current Land use	Agricultural	
Future work	No	
Monument type/ period		
Significant finds		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Middlemore Farm, Daventry	
Study area		
OS Easting & Northing	4565, 2651	
Height OD		
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	The Planning Archaeologist, Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J. Leigh	
Project Manager	Andy Chapman	
Sponsor or funding body	Daventry District Council	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	June 2005	
End date	February 2006	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		Watching brief forms (10) Colour slides (20) Black and white contact prints (20) Digital photographs (32)
Digital		Report text and figures

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
DURING PHASE II OF INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS
ON LAND AT
MIDDLEMORE FARM, DAVENTRY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JUNE 2005 – FEBRUARY 2006**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during Phase II of Infrastructure Works on land at Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire. An undisturbed stratigraphy was noted across all of the development area. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between June 2005 and February 2006 during Phase II of Infrastructure Works on land at Middlemore Farm, Daventry, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 4565, 2651: Fig 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Daventry District Council and was undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a brief for an archaeological watching brief issued by Northamptonshire County Council, Historic Environment Team.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography

The development area is located on the north side of Daventry. The ground is relatively flat at the extreme western side of the site before sloping down towards Drayton reservoir at the south-east. At the north-east the ground slopes down towards the east.

Although the British Geological Survey has mapped the site as Boulder Clay, further work by the Northamptonshire County Council Environmental Services Laboratory refined the identification to Middle Lias Silts and Clays (ESL 1987, 1999). North of Middlemore Farm lies a cap of the Marlstone Rock Bed. The overlying material throughout is a heavy clay soil with chalk and flints. At the extreme south-west tip of Drayton reservoir lies a small area of alluvium around one of the feeder streams.

2.2 Historical Background

The development site lies 3km north-west of the major hillfort of Borough Hill and 5km west of the Roman Small Town of Bannaventa at Whilton Lodge.

Large areas of medieval field systems survived as ridge and furrow earthworks on aerial photographs of 1947. Small areas still survive around Middlemore Farm, but these are not considered significant enough to warrant any further archaeological work.

Up to the modern residential development the land surrounding Middlemore Farm area has been in agricultural use, the present farm buildings being the focal point in this respect.

Archaeological field-walking carried out on and around the site in 1973 identified two small concentrations of Roman pottery (NGR SP 564 649 and SP 566 651) along with small quantities of prehistoric worked flint. Subsequent field-walking carried out as part of the evaluation, and centred on these grid references recovered further Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery. No distinct concentrations indicative of buried 'sites' could be identified. In areas of grassland where field-walking was impossible geophysical survey was conducted. This failed to identify any significant anomalies suggestive of buried sites.

A watching brief carried out during Phase I of the Infrastructure Works (Leigh, 2002, Fig 2) located a small area of archaeological features to the immediate south of the Middlemore Farm buildings (SP 5654 6510) comprising a number of pits and an L-shaped gully. These produced a range of early Roman domestic debris, including pottery and some ceramic roof tile of the late first to early second century AD. A subsequent watching brief carried out during development works on Plot 1 (Leigh, 2003, Fig 2), north of the farm buildings revealed linear ditch systems of Romano-British date. A watching brief carried out 12m to the south of the farm buildings (Wilson, 2004) revealed a series of features of Roman date.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Observe and record all archaeological deposits, uncovered during the ground-works for the new road-ways and drainage trenches.
- ◆ Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits.

Ground-works comprised the excavation of new road ways with associated drainage trenches. The ground-works were carried out using a JCB mechanical excavator.

Whilst it was not a requirement of the Archaeological aspect of the Planning Condition, in view of the probability of encountering significant archaeological deposits, Daventry District Council suggested a pre-emptive soil strip in those areas nearest to the present farm buildings. This was subsequently extended across much of the new road system.

A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, along with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the standards and guidelines for an archaeological watching brief (IFA 2001).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

Undisturbed deposits were revealed across the development area. The stratigraphic sequence comprised compact natural brown clay, overlain by mid grey/brown silt loam subsoil, up to 0.22m thick, containing occasional rounded stones. Sealing this was grey/brown topsoil up to 0.19m thick. There was little variation in the thickness, or nature of the stratigraphy across the total area of the new road ways.

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The site archive comprises:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	10
Colour slides	20
Black and white contacts and negatives	20
Digital photographs	32

6 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered. The ground-works revealed that the area of the new road ways contained undisturbed soils.

Whilst previous watching briefs carried out at the site have revealed archaeological deposits located around the area of the present farm buildings, the pre-emptive soil strip produced no archaeological evidence, either in the form of archaeological deposits or through the recovery of artefacts. The most significant area comprised the road line to the immediate west of the retained buildings of Middlemore Farm. The absence of any cut features or recovered finds in this area would appear to indicate that the western boundary of the Roman site lies just to the east of the new roadway, and that, as has been previously conjectured, the focus of the Roman settlement lies beneath the present farm buildings.

The watching brief was carried out in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable.

7 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks are extended to Steve Whelton of Daventry District Councils Transportation and Technical Services Department for his invaluable help and co-operation throughout the whole of the Middlemore Project.

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Plate 1: The area of the pre-emptive strip before the start of ground-works



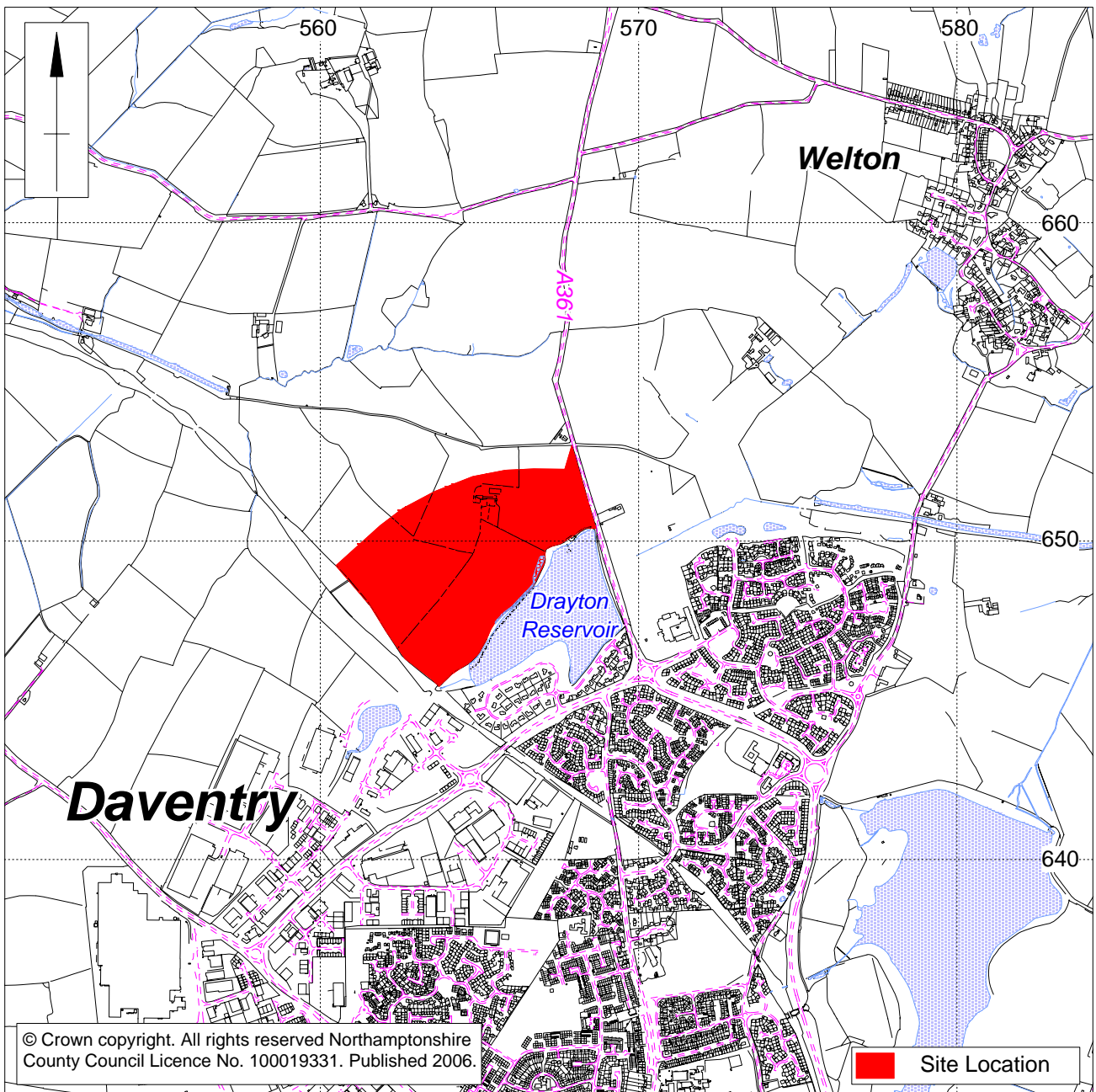
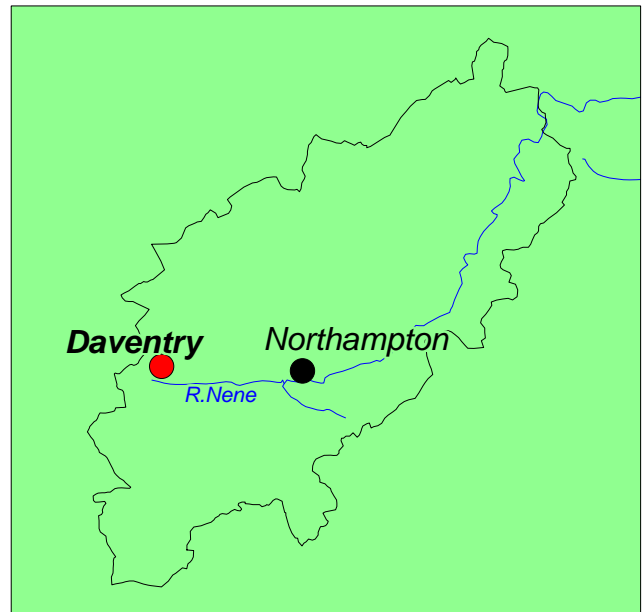
Plate 2: Start of ground-works



Plate 3: The stratigraphic sequence



Plate 4: General view of ground-works



Scale 1:10,000

Site Location Fig 1

