

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An Archaeological Evaluation
Paston Parkway, Peterborough
January 2007



Jason Clarke

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Report 07/04

STAFF

Project Manager Adam Yates BA AIFA
Fieldwork Jason Clarke BSc MA PIFA
Nathan Flavell BA PG Dip
Angela Warner
Maria Gale
Text Jason Clarke

QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	P Chapman		
Verified by	A Maul		
Approved by	Bill Boismier		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Paston Parkway, Peterborough	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation along a stretch of Paston Parkway to establish the presence or absence of features associated with the Car Dyke (Scheduled monument PE219) and Gunthorpe playing fields to establish the presence or absence of Saxon burials. Two post medieval linear features were found in the playing field trenches; no other archaeological features were seen.	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Field Evaluation (Site Code: PPP06)	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	A number of Saxon burials were excavated, on the area which is now Gunthorpe playing fields in 1987.	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type And period	Car Dyke (Scheduled Monument PE 219)	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Cambridgeshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Paston Parkway and Gunthorpe playing fields	
Easting Northing	TP 1815 0382	
Area Ha	3.88	
Height OD		
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Atkins Heritage	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Jason Clarke	
Project Manager	Adam Yates	
Sponsor or funding body	Peterborough City Council	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	December 2006	
End date		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title		
Serial title & volume		
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY	1
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	1
4	METHODOLOGY	2
5	RESULTS OF FIELDWORK	2
6	CONCLUSIONS	3
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	4
	A1: SITE DATA	5

Figures

Fig 1: Site location 1:15,000

Fig 2: Trench location 1:5000

Plates

Title page: Car Dyke in its present form

Plate 1: Example of excavated trench on Gunthorpe playing fields

Plate 2: Example of excavated trench from Paston Parkway, showing natural Oxford clay

Plate 3: Furrow [1203] in trench 12, facing north

Plate 4: Gully [1204] in trench 12, facing south

Plate 5: Example of buried soil from trench 7, facing west

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
PASTON PARKWAY, PETERBOROUGH
DECEMBER 2006

ABSTRACT

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation on land proposed for the widening of Paston Parkway, Peterborough, and on Gunthorpe playing fields located to the south. Ten trenches were opened on the verge of the Paston Parkway, which revealed a series of made-up layers put down during the construction of the current Paston Parkway, overlying Oxford clays, no archaeological features were seen during the excavations. Four trenches were opened in the Gunthorpe playing fields to establish the presence or absence of Anglo-Saxon burials which were discovered in 1987. The trenches revealed two post-medieval gullies, no burials were discovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation during December 2006 on land proposed for widening of Paston Parkway (NGR TF 1815 0382). The site comprises a total 3.88ha, of which 3.37ha comprises road verge to the north of the current carriageway and 0.51ha of playing fields to the south (Fig 1).

The work was undertaken for Atkins Heritage on behalf of Peterborough City Council in order to inform the planning application. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology, which met the requirements of a brief issued by Atkins Heritage (NA 2006; Atkins 2006).

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site occupies an area of approximately 3.88ha on the fen edge, bounded to the north by Car Dyke (Scheduled Monument PE 219), to the west by housing (Fig 1).

The site under evaluation consisted of land proposed for the widening of the Paston Parkway, comprising roughly ploughed topsoil deposited in the building of the current carriageway and playing fields used for sports.

The geology of the area comprises Oxford clays with overlying Gravel River Terracing to the south. The overlying soils are described as slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loams over clayey soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies immediately south of Car Dyke, a Roman drainage feature which has been linked to a Hadrianic imperial estate in the Fens. The Dyke in its present form is an earthwork with a waterfilled ditch (see front cover), but this is almost certainly a later creation, probably on the line of the original Roman monument.

Earlier archaeological work on the site included the excavation of a number of Anglo-Saxon burials during the development of the current housing estates and playing field

located to the south of the Paston Parkway, in 1987.

The current work had the specific aims of defining:

- The presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- The character of the close environs of Car Dyke, specifically the presence or otherwise of a southern bank.
- To establish whether remains associated with the Anglo-Saxon cemetery are present within the development area.

4 METHODOLOGY

Fourteen trenches were excavated in total. Trenches 1-10 were located on land to the north of Paston Parkway and trenches 11-14 were located to the south on Gunthorpe playing fields (Fig 2). Trenches 1-10, 11 and 14 were 20m in length, while trenches 12 and 13 were 50m in length. They were excavated using a mechanical digger fitted with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation proceeded as far as the first significant archaeological layer or in its absence as far as the surface of the natural clays and gravels.

All potential archaeological features were examined by hand excavation, by cutting a section through them. Standard Northamptonshire Archaeology recording procedures were employed.

All works were carried out in accordance with IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (IFA 1999) and *Standard for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003). Procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council's Health and Safety policy and Northamptonshire Archaeology's Health and Safety at Work Guidelines (NA 2003).

5 RESULTS OF FIELDWORK

Paston Parkway

Trenches 1-10 were excavated on land to the north of Paston Parkway and south of Car Dyke (Scheduled Monument PE 219). The trenches were placed to establish the nature of the Car Dyke's environs, such as a south bank or other associated features. No archaeological features were seen during the excavation of these trenches.

When the Paston Parkway was built in the 1980s the land where the trial trenches were located appears to have been prepared to become a carriageway. The carriageway was not constructed but the land was substantially disturbed by the preparation process and this is reflected in the results from the trenches.

Trenches 1-6 consisted of a series of clay make-up layers deposited during construction of the Paston Parkway, overlying Oxford clay. Natural was encountered at a depth between 0.6m and 1.2m.

Trenches 7-10 consisted of the same clay make-up layers as trenches 1-6 but at a depth of 0.7-1m a layer of black organic clay was encountered. The layer contained modern brick, tile and plastic, which were not retained, and has been interpreted as the ground surface at the time of the construction of the Paston Parkway. The underlying geology was Oxford clay and no archaeological features were seen.

Gunthorpe Playing Field

Trenches 11-14 were excavated on the Gunthorpe playing fields, to the south of Paston Parkway. The trenches were located to establish whether remains associated with the Anglo-Saxon cemetery were present within the playing field development.

Two archaeological features were seen in trench 12. A north-east/south-west aligned post-medieval furrow [1203] (Plate 3) and a shallow post-medieval gully [1204] (Plate 4) of the same alignment were excavated. The underlying geology encountered was Oxford clay. Oxford clay was also encountered at a depth of 0.3m in trench 11, no other archaeology was seen.

Trenches 13 and 14 consisted of 0.2m of made ground overlying natural alluvial river gravels, overlying Oxford clay. No archaeological features were seen during the excavations of these trenches.

6 CONCLUSIONS

No significant archaeological features were encountered within the trial trenches. The excavation area had been significantly disturbed by modern development. This is shown in the level of made ground in trenches 1-10 (Plate 2). It appears, from the deposits encountered, that in trial trenches 1-6 the ground level was reduced and then built up during excavation, therefore destroying any potential archaeological remains. In trenches 7-10 the pre-Paston Parkway ground level was encountered below made-up deposits (Plate 5), these trenches provided the best opportunity to encounter archaeological features but none were encountered during the excavation.

Trenches 11-14 were aimed at establishing the presence or absence of features associated with the Anglo-Saxon cemetery excavated in 1987. No features were encountered, but the trenches did establish the geology of the area and therefore the possible extent of the cemetery. In trenches 13 and 14 the geology was gravel terracing overlying Oxford clay (Plate 1), with the depth of gravels reducing in depth towards the west. This is shown in trenches 11 and 12 where the geology is Oxford clay, therefore the gravels stop between trenches 11 and 12 and 13 and 14.

No evidence for the Anglo-Saxon cemetery was found, although this may be due to some truncation when the playing field was built. It is likely that the cemetery would have been placed on the higher ground of the gravel terracing and not on the lower, waterlogged Oxford clay deposits encountered in trenches 11 and 12 and therefore some burials may still be *in situ* to the south on the playing field.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atkins 2006 *Paston Parkway; Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation*, Atkins Heritage

Gurney D 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, ALGAOEE

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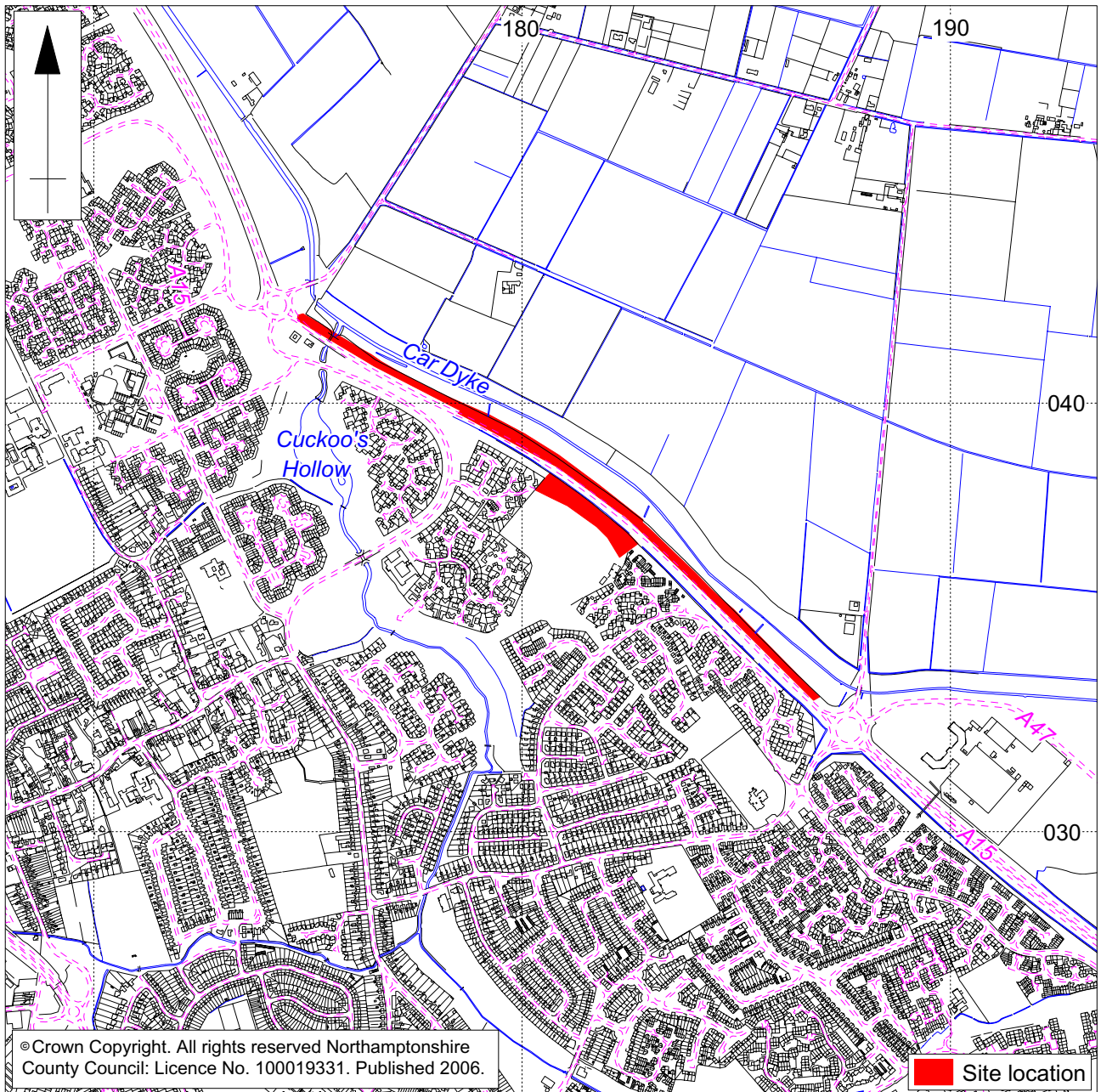
Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983 *Soils of Eastern England*, Ordnance Survey

A1: SITE DATA

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description
1	101	Layer	Topsoil 0.2m thick
	102	Layer	Make up layer. 0.25m thick
	103	Layer	Natural. Mid blue grey compact Oxford Clay
2	201	Layer	Topsoil 0 – 0.25m thick
	202	Layer	Make up layer. 0.9m
	203	Layer	Natural. Mid blue grey compact Oxford Clay
3	301	Layer	Topsoil 0.22m thick
	302	Layer	Make up layer. 0.25m thick
	303	Layer	Make up layer. 0.15m thick
	304	Layer	Make up layer. 0.5m thick
	305	Layer	Make up layer. 0.2m thick
	306	Layer	Natural. Mid blue grey compact Oxford Clay
4	401	Layer	Topsoil 0.25m thick
	402	Layer	Make up layer. 0.25m thick
	403	Layer	Make up layer. 0.6m
	404	Layer	Natural. Mid blue grey compact Oxford Clay
5	501	Layer	Topsoil 0.3m thick
	502	Layer	Make up layer. 0.25m thick
	503	Layer	Make up layer. 0.35m thick
	504	Layer	Make up layer. 0.35m thick
6	601	Layer	Topsoil 0.2m thick
	602	Layer	Make up layer. 0.2m thick
	603	Layer	Make up layer. 0.1m thick
	604	Layer	Make up layer. 0.56m thick
	605	Layer	Natural. Mid blue grey compact Oxford Clay
7	701	Layer	Topsoil 0.25m thick
	702	Layer	Make up layer. 0.25m thick
	703	Layer	Make up layer. 0.4m thick

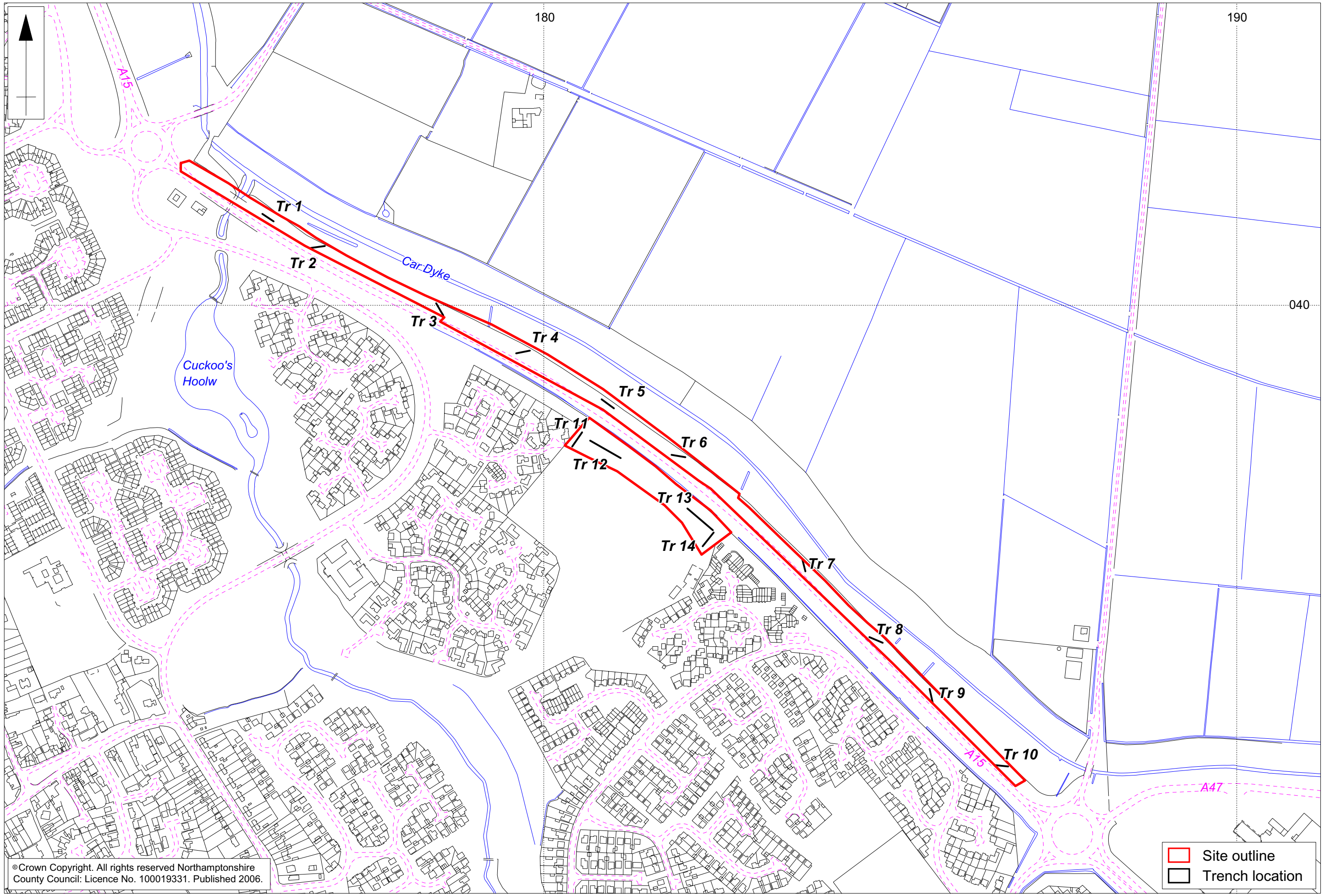
Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description
	704	Layer	Mid black organic sandy clay. Buried soil from the 1980's. 0.3m thick
	705	Layer	Natural mid blue grey Oxford Clay
8	801	Layer	Topsoil 0.3m thick
	802	Layer	Make up layer. 0.45m thick
	803	Layer	Black organic clay. Buried soil from the 1980's surface. 0.1m thick
	804	Layer	Mid brown yellow clay, possible subsoil. 0.3m thick
	805	Layer	Natural mid blue grey Oxford Clay
9	901	Layer	Topsoil. 0.25m thick
	902	Layer	Make up layer. 0.3m thick
	903	Layer	Make up layer. 0.2m
	904	Layer	Black organic clay. Buried soil layer from the 1980's surface. 0.1m
	905	Layer	Orange brown clay with patches of gravel, possible sub soil layer. 0.2m
	906	Layer	Natural mid blue grey Oxford clay
10	1001	Layer	Topsoil. 0.4m thick
	1002	Layer	Make up layer. 0.2m thick
	1003	Layer	Make up layer. 0.4m thick
	1004	Layer	Black organic clay, buried soil from the 1980's surface
	1005	Layer	Natural blue grey Oxford clay
11	1101	Layer	Topsoil. 0.3m thick
	1102	Layer	Natural. Orange brown Oxford clay
12	1201	Layer	Topsoil. 0.3m thick
	1202	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay, fill of furrow [1203]
	1203	Cut	Cut of furrow
	1204	Cut	Cut of shallow post medieval gully
	1205	Fill	Mid brown sandy clay, fill of gully [1204]
	1206	Layer	Natural brown yellow Oxford Clay
13	1301	Layer	Topsoil. 0.25m thick

Trench No	Context	Deposit Type	Description
	1302	Layer	Make up layer. 0.2m thick
	1303	Layer	Make up layer. 0.2m thick
	1304	Layer	Natural red brown silty gravel. 0.2m thick
	1305	Layer	Natural dark brown alluvial wash gravel
	1306	Layer	Natural blue grey Oxford clay
14	1401	Layer	Topsoil. 0.2m thick
	1402	Layer	Make up layer. 0.25m thick
	1403	Layer	Natural brown red clay gravel. 0.2m
	1404	Layer	Natural blue grey Oxford clay



Scale 1: 15,000

Site location Fig 1



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Scale: 1:5000

Site outline
 Trench location

Trench location Fig 2



Plate 1: Example of excavated trench from Gunthorpe playing fields



Plate 2: Example of excavated trench from Paston Parkway, showing natural Oxford Clay



Plate 3: Furrow [1203] in trench 12, facing north



Plate 4: Gully [1204] in trench 12, facing south



Plate 5: Example of buried soil in trench 7, facing west