

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Evaluation at

Ullswater Road

Huntingdon

Cambridgeshire

ECB 2833



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Report 08/22

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS							
Project name	Archaeological evaluation at Ullswater Road Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire.						
Short description	Eleven trenches were excavat	Eleven trenches were excavated by Northamptonshire Archaeology on					
		ingdon, Cambridgeshire. A small number of					
	features consisting of two shallow linear gullies and seven more substantial						
	linear ditches were uncovered	l.					
Project type	Evaluation						
Site status	None						
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (Daw	son 2004)					
Current Land use	Abandoned sporting fields						
Future work	Unknown						
Monument type/ period	-						
Significant finds							
PROJECT LOCATION							
County	Cambridgeshire						
Site address	Ullswater Road, Huntingdon,	Cambridgeshire					
Study area	2.18ha						
OS Easting & Northing	NGR TL 2033 6893						
Height OD	12m OD						
PROJECT CREATORS							
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeolog						
Project brief originator	Cambridgeshire County Cour						
Project design originator	Cambridgeshire County Cour						
Director/Supervisor	Paul Kajewski, Northamptons	shire Archaeology					
Project Manager	Adam Yates, Northamptonshi	ire Archaeology					
Sponsor or funding body	Freshwater Estates						
PROJECT DATE							
Start date	21 th January 2008						
End date	25 th January 2008						
ARCHIVES	Location	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)					
	(Accession no.)						
Physical							
Paper	(ECB 2833)	Context file and site registers					
	2 plan sheets and 2 section sheets						
Digital	(ECB 2833)	PDF of report and illustrations.					
BIBLIOGRAPHY	_						
Title	Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Ullswater Road Huntingdon						
Serial title & volume							
Author(s)	Paul Kajewski						
Page numbers							
Date	February 2008						

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LAND AT

ULLSWATER ROAD

HUNTINGDON

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

JANUARY 2008

ABSTRACT

Eleven trenches were excavated by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Ullswater Road, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire.

A total of nine archaeological features were uncovered, none of which produced any artefactual material. The features comprised two shallow gullies and seven more substantial ditches.

1 INTRODUCTION

Archaeological investigation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology for Freshwater Estates in January of 2008 on land at Ullswater Road, Huntingdon (NGR: TL 2033 6893; Fig 1).

The fieldwork was designed to meet the requirements of the Cambridgeshire County Council brief (Gdaniec 2007) issued in response to planning applications 00/01451/OUT and 07/0045/REM, and the Specification prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (2007).

Previous fieldwork relating to this land has included a desk-based assessment (Dawson 2004) which concluded the site had low potential for archaeological remains.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

The site at Ullswater Road occupies approximately 2.18ha (Fig 1). It is bounded to the north and south by open grassed flood plains, by a railway to the east and by modern housing to the west. The site was part of the area's common field system in the area during the 17th and 18th centuries. The site remained largely undeveloped up to the 20th century until sporting fields and a bowling green were established with car parking and a clubhouse.

The site is situated within the valley of Barracks Brook, a tributary of the Great Ouse, at a height of around 20m OD. The site is located on Jurassic and Cretaceous clays with soils of the Evesham

3 Association (Dawson 2004).

2.2 Archaeological background

A full archaeological background of the area can be found in the desk-based assessment (Dawson 2004) which was supplemented by consultation of the Historic Environment Record (HER) carried out in January 2008. The following is a précis of the results of these exercises.

Whilst prehistoric remains are well attested in the Great Ouse valley, none are known from the study area.

Roman settlement and activity is attested by structural remains from the modern Hippodrome Cinema (HER 2625) and findspots elsewhere in the town (HER 2613 and HER 871). The Roman road of Ermine Street (the current A141) runs north-westwards 300m to the east of the site.

Huntingdon is first recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in AD 921, although the origins of the town probably extend back as far as the Roman period. The town expanded during the early medieval period due to Huntingdon's low bridge over the Great Ouse enticing traders to it wharfs. William the Conqueror travelled through the town in 1068 and ordered a castle to be built. Huntingdon suffered greatly during the anarchy of Stephen's reign, the Black Death and the Civil War; its fortunes did not improve in the end of 19th century when the towns growth was again dealt a blow when it was no longer a stop over for coach traffic once the railway came through.

The desk-based assessment suggested that the plot lies beyond the boundaries of the historic town in an area of marginal land, until it was brought into the bounds of the modern town in the 20th Century. This is reflected in the only HER entry within the development area which refers to evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation (HER 8747).

Archaeological evaluations undertaken at Merrit Street approximately 200m to the north-east of the site found an undated ditch and post-medieval quarry pits (Edgeworth *et al* 2004, Edmunson *et al* 2006).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The main aim of the evaluation is to develop a predictive model relating to the character, extent, date, state of preservation and depth of any important archaeological remains present. The more specific aims as outlined in the brief are to:

• Provide further information on the historic character of the development site

- Asses the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits encountered
- Place the remains within their local, regional and national context

3.2 Methodology

The evaluation trenches were located by GPS (Leica System 100). The topsoil, subsoil and overburden were removed by a 360° excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, operating under continuous archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation proceeded as far as the natural substrate or the first significant archaeological horizons, whereupon excavation continued by hand. All potential archaeological features were investigated by hand.

After consultation with the developer and Kasia Gdaniec (Cambridge County Council Planning and Countryside Advice) it was decided, due to ground conditions (which included standing water, large spoil heaps, overhanging trees and active services) and the concerns of the developer not to disturb the ground beneath the foundation of the buildings that six of the eleven trenches were moved into the positions shown in Figure 2. Trench 11 was omitted due to its proximity to large willow trees and to a remnant irrigation water pipe that was still active. Trench 6 was split into two sections due to the presence of a haul road, the southern part of this was renumbered Trench 11 (Fig 2).

Standard Northamptonshire Archaeology recording procedures were employed (NA 2004). All works were conducted in accordance with the *IFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (1994, revised 2001) and the *Code of Conduct* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1985, revised 2000) and *Management of Archaeological Projects* (EH 1991).

4 RESULTS

4.1 General stratigraphic sequence

The geology of the site was clay with gravels. This was sealed below a layer of light brown silty clay subsoil with high flint content. This was overlain by mid brown silty clay topsoil with a significant degree of organic material. The ground level had been raised in the modern period towards the northern end of the site (Trenches 3, 4 and 8), and tarmac had been laid down for car parking in the south-eastern corner. Overburden depths totalled approximately 0.50-0.60m.

All of the archaeological features found within the trenches were cut into the geology and sealed by the subsoil, with the exception of feature [406] in Trench 4 which was cut from beneath the levelling layer (402).

4.2 Archaeological features (Fig 2)

Eleven different trenches were excavated in total and archaeology was revealed in four (Figs 2 and 3). For the purpose of clarity each trench will be discussed separately. A full inventory of contexts can be found in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 ran on a north-west to south-east alignment and was 50m long by 1.8m wide. The westernmost section of the trench was not excavated, due to the proximity of the footing positions for the proposed residential development and overhanging foliage from trees that line the edge of the site.

Natural orange brown flinty clay (103) was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.64m. Light brown silty clay subsoil (102) was 0.40-0.42m thick was overlain by mid-brown silty clay topsoil (101), which was between 0.23m and 0.28m in depth.

No archaeological features were uncovered in this trench.

Trench 2

Trench 2 lay on a north-south alignment and measured 35m in length by 1.8m in width.

Natural orange brown flinty clay (203) was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.50m. Light brown silty clay subsoil (202) 0.20m thick was overlain by mid-brown silty clay topsoil (201) 0.30m in depth.

No archaeological features were uncovered in this trench.

Trench 3

Trench three lay on a north-east to south-west alignment and was 50m in length by 1.8m in width.

Natural orange brown clay sand with flint gravel (304) was present at a depth of 0.60m - 0.65m. Light brown silty clay subsoil (303) was 0.20m-0.30m thick which was overlain by a make up layer (302), approximately 0.05m-0.10m thick in the northern end of the trench. This layer contained clay, gravels and modern building rubble used to level the ground surface for the construction of the playing fields (also seen in Trench 4). It was overlain by mid brown silty clay topsoil (301) which was approximately 0.30m in depth.

Four features were uncovered in this trench and were all cut into the geology (304) and overlain by subsoil (303).

Three parallel ditches [306], [310] and [312] crossed the trench on a north-west to south-east alignment in the southern end of the trench. They all had a low-angled profile with equally graduated sides, ditch [306] had a regular concave base, ditches [306] and [312] were only part

excavated due to conditions (Fig 3 Sections 19 and 20). The fills (305), (309) and (311) respectively were light grey-brown silty clay. No finds present in the excavated sections.

Ditch terminal [308] was encountered in the northern end of the trench, on a north-east to south-west alignment (Fig 2). It had a regular U-shaped profile with equally graduated sides and a concave, regular base. It measured 0.80m wide and had a depth of 0.40m (Fig 3 Section 14). The single fill (309) was light grey-brown silty clay, there were no finds present in the excavated section. This may be a continuation of ditch [406] in Trench 4.

Modern land drains on a north-west to south-east alignment were uncovered within the trench, these were cut into the subsoil.

Trench 4

Trench 4 lay on a north-west to south-east alignment and was 50m in length by 1.8m in width.

Natural orange brown clay sand (404) was present at a depth of approximately 0.75m. Mid brown silty clay subsoil (403), up to 0.25m deep, was overlain by dark grey silty clay levelling layer (402), 0.2m deep, which contained modern debris. Topsoil (401) was 0.2-0.3m in depth.

East-west aligned gully [406] was exposed at the northern end of the trench, cut from beneath levelling layer (402) through the subsoil (403). It was 0.4m wide, 0.18m deep, and U-shaped in profile. The single fill (405) was dark grey silty clay. This may be a continuation of ditch [308] in Trench 3.

Trench 5

Trench 5 lay on a north-west to south-east alignment and measured 50m in length by 1.8m in width.

Natural orange brown flinty clay (503) was present at a depth of approximately 0.60m. Light brown silty clay subsoil (502) 0.20m thick was overlain by brown silty clay topsoil (501).

No archaeological features were uncovered in this trench.

Trench 6

Trench 6 lay on a north-west to south-east alignment and measured 25m in length by 1.8m in width.

Natural orange brown sandy clay (603) was present at a depth of approximately 0.60m. Light brown silty subsoil (602), 0.20m thick, was overlain by mid-brown silty clay topsoil (601).

No archaeological features were uncovered in this trench.

Trench 7

Trench 7 lay on a north-east to south-west alignment and measured 50m in length by 1.8m in width.

Natural orange brown clay sand with flint gravel (703) was present at a depth of approximately 0.70m. Light brown silty clay subsoil (702), 0.20m thick, was overlain by mid brown silty clay topsoil (701).

This trench contained several modern plastic drains cut into the subsoil drains one parallel to the trench edge connected to others that formed a chevron pattern; these were associated with the drainage of the sporting field located to the west.

No archaeological features were uncovered in this trench.

Trench 8

Trench 8 lay on a north-east to south-west alignment and measured 50m in length by 1.8m in width.

Natural range brown clay sand with flint gravel (805) was present at a depth of approximately 0.62m. Mid brown sandy silty clay subsoil (804) 0.3m in depth was overlain by buried topsoil (803), comprising dark grey humic silty clay, up to 0.28m in depth. Overlying this was levelling layer (802) comprising mid-dark grey brown silty clay (802), 0.1m deep, containing modern debris, in turn overlain by the current topsoil (801).

Levelling layer (802) almost certainly related to the construction of the sports pitches.

Five features were revealed in this trench all cut into the geology (805) beneath the buried subsoil (804) (Fig 2).

Two parallel ditches, [811] and [815] crossed the southern end of the trench on an east-west alignment (Fig 2, Fig 3 Sections 8 and 12). They each had a U-shaped profile with equally graduated sides and a concave, regular base (Fig 3 sections 8 and 12). Ditch [811] measured 0.40m wide and 0.18m deep and ditch [815] measured 1.28m and 0.40m deep. The fills (810) and (814) respectively were light grey-brown silty clay; there were no finds present in the excavated sections.

In the northern end of the trench two almost parallel features [813] and [809] were uncovered on a north-east to south-west alignment. Feature [809] a possible furrow, was 1.63m wide and 0.07m deep with a low angled U-shaped profile with equally graduating sides and a concave base. Its fill (808) was light grey-brown silty clay; no finds were found in the excavated section.

Ditch [813] was 1.80m wide and 0.35m deep it contained a light grey-brown silty clay fill (812), no finds were uncovered in this feature (Fig 3 Section 10).

A single tree bole [807] was also present (not illustrated).

Trench 9

Trench 9 lay on a north-west to south-east alignment within the car park and measured 50m in length by 1.8m in width. A section of the trench could not be excavated due the presence live services.

Mottled dark grey/orange/black gravel geology (909) was present at a depth of approximately 0.80 to 0.88m, the dark colour being as a result of staining from the ovelying car park material. Ten metres from the eastern end of the trench the natural changed to unstained orange/brown gravel (910). Directly overlying the gravel was the car park material 0.6m deep, comprising layers of clay, crushed brick rubble, gravel and tarmac (901-8).

Trench 10

Trench 10 lay on a north-east to south-west alignment, 20m in length and 1.8m wide, within the car park that was once associated with the sporting ground.

Natural mottled dark grey/orange/black silt (1009) was present at approximately 0.80-0.88m and was stained from the car park construction. This was overlain by the car park material, comprising layers of clay, crushed brick rubble, gravel and tarmac (1001-1008) 0.6m deep.

Trench 11

Trench 11 lay on an almost north to south alignment and measured 15m in length by 1.8m in width.

Natural orange brown clay with small amounts of flints (1103) was present at a depth of approximately 0.80m. Light brown silty clay subsoil (1102) was 0.40m thick and was overlain by mid brown silty clay topsoil (1101) which was 0.40m in depth.

East-west aligned gully [1105] was cut into natural (1103) and overlain by subsoil (1102) (Fig 2). It was U-shaped in profile and measured 0.30m wide and 0.15m deep. The single light grey/orange silty clay fill (1104) produced no finds.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

5.1 Introduction

Four 10 litre soil samples were hand collected from a range of features during the course of excavation. The samples were analysed to establish the presence/absence of ecofacts, level of preservation and the potential contribution to the understanding of the site.

5.2 Method

The samples were processed in a modified siraf tank fitted with a 250micron mesh and flot sieve. The resulting flots were dried and examined under a microscope (10x magnification). Residues were dried and sorted for ecofacts and artefacts.

5.3 Results

Preservation

A high level of fragmentation of charcoal was observed. Preservation of molluscs was reasonable.

Ecofacts present

Table 1: Ecofacts by sample and context

Cut/fill	807/806	813/812	813/814	308/307
Sample	2	3	4	5
Context type		Ditch fill	Ditch fill	Ditch fill
Volume(litres)	10	10	10	10
Charcoal*	2	3	2	3
Molluscs				
Discus rotundatus			1	
Bithynia sp			1	
Lymnaea sp		1		
Indeterminate snail		2		

^{*}key for number of charcoal fragments. 2= 2-10, 3= 10-20

5.3 Discussion

Any discussion of the environment or economy of the site is precluded due to the paucity of finds and the poor preservation of charcoal fragments which renders identification impossible

5.4 Potential

The potential for further analysis on the current samples is severely limited. However as ecofacts were observed in all samples, it is suggested that, should further excavation take place, sampling of selected datable features should be undertaken.

6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation has revealed a series of undated ditches on the site. These are generally on a northwest to south-east or north-east to south-west alignment. The lack of artefactual evidence would indicate that these probably form field boundaries, well away from any settlement focus, as would the lack of any pits, post-holes or other direct evidence for settlement activity. Evidence for the reestablishment of some of these boundaries was seen in Trenches 3 and 8, indicating that the features became rapidly backfilled, probably due to the wet nature of the ground.

The construction of the playing fields, bowling green and associated infrastructure appears to have severely truncated the remains. Parts of the site appear to have been stripped and levelled as part of this process. Only one possible furrow was identified in Trench 8.

In conclusion, the remains identified at Ullswater Road appear to represent undated field boundaries which have been truncated by later development.

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Northamptonshire Archaeology A service of Northamptonshire Council

February 2008

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context	Туре	Description	Sample No.	Finds	Width (m)	Depth (m)
1	(101)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and high root content	-	-	-	0.20-0.28m
	(102)	Subsoil	Light brown silty clay with flints	-	-	-	0.40-0.42m
	(103)	Natural	Orange brown clay with flints	-	-	-	0.64m
2	(201)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and high root content	-	-	-	0.30m
	(202)	Subsoil	Light brown silty clay with flints	-	-		0.20m
	(203)	Natural	Orange brown clay with flints	-	-	-	-
3	(301)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and high root content	-	-	-	0.18-0.20m
	(302)	Make up layer	Mixture of clays, gravel and modern CBM.	-	-	-	0.05-0.10m
	(303)	Subsoil	Light brown silty clay with flints	-	-	-	0.20m-0.30m
	(304)	Natural	Orange brown clay sand flint gravel	-	-	-	0.60m-0.65m
	(305)	Fill	Fill of [306], light brown/grey silty clay with flint gravels	-	-	0.70m	0.26m
	[306]	Cut	Cut of linear gully, equal sides and slightly curved base.	-	-	0.70m	0.26m
	(307)	Fill	Fill of [308], light brown/grey silty clay with flint gravels	5	-	0.88m	0.40m
	[308]	Cut	Cut of linear gully, equal sides and slightly curved base.	-	-	0.88m	0.40m
	(309)	Fill	Fill of [310], light brown/grey silty clay with flint gravels	-	-	0.90m	0.30m approx

Trench	Context	Туре	Description	Sample No.	Finds	Width (m)	Depth (m)
	[310]	Cut	Cut of linear gully, equal sides and slightly curved base.	-	-	0.90m	0.30m approx
	(311)	Fill	Fill of [312], light brown/grey silty clay with flint gravels	-	-	0.70m	-
	[312]	Cut	Cut of linear gully, equal sides and slightly curved base.	-	-	0.70m	-
4	(401)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and some root activity	-	-	-	0.20m-0.30m
	(402)	Levelling layer	Dark grey silty clay	-	-	-	0.15-0.25m
	(403)	Subsoil	Light brown silty clay with flints	-	-	-	0.20m
	(404)	Natural	Orange brown clay sand flint gravel	-	-	-	0.75m
	(405)	Fill	Dark grey/black	1	-	0.40m	0.25m
	[406]	Cut	Step sided cut with u-shaped profile and rounded base	-	-	0.40m	0.25m
5	(501)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and some root activity	-	-	-	0.20m-0.30m
	(502)	Subsoil	Dark grey silty clay	-	-	-	0.20m
	(503)	Natural	Orange brown clay sand flint gravel	-	-	-	0.75m
6	(601)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and some root activity	-	-	-	0.20m-0.30m
	(602)	Levelling layer	Dark grey silty clay	-	-	-	0.05m-0.10m
	(603)	Subsoil	Dark grey silty clay	-	-	-	0.20m
	(604)	Natural	Orange brown clay sand flint gravel	-	-	-	0.60m

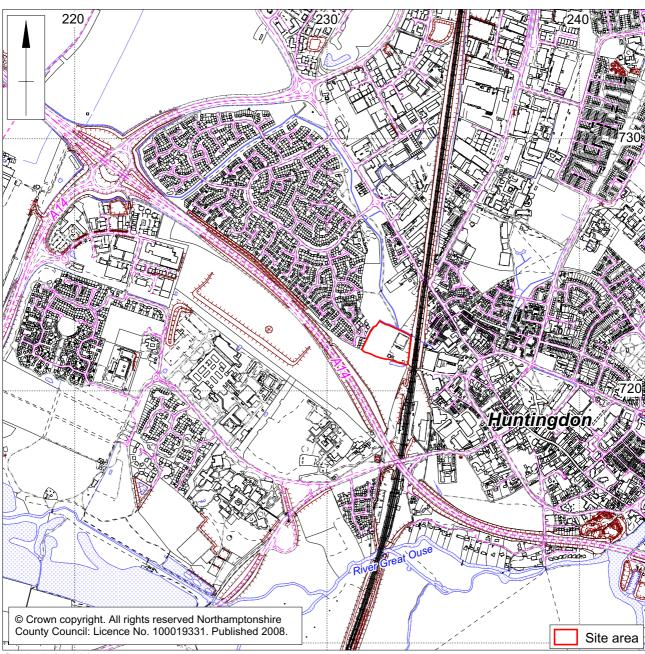
Trench	Context	Туре	Description	Sample No.	Finds	Width (m)	Depth (m)
7	(701)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and some root activity	-	-	-	0.50m
	(702)	Subsoil	Dark grey silty clay	-	-	-	0.20m-0.23m
	(703)	Natural	Orange brown clay sand flint gravel	-	-	-	0.60m
8	(801)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and some root activity	-	-	-	0.10m-0.12m
	(802)	Make up layer	Light grey/brown silty clay with intermixed clay patches and gravel	-	-	-	0.10m
	(803)	Buried soil	Dark grey clay silt	-	-	-	0.20m
	(804)	Buried subsoil	Mid brown silty clay with occasional small gravel	-	-	-	0.20m-0.30
	(805)	Natural	Orange brown clay sand flint gravel	-	-	-	0.62m
	(806)	Fill	Fill of [807]. Burnt tree throw. Silty clay with black and red burning stains	-	-	0.50m	0.05m
	[807]	Cut	Cut of burnt tree throw. Irregular roughly circular in shape	2	-	0.50m	0.05m
	(808)	Fill	Fill of [809], light brown/grey silty clay with flint gravels. Remnant of furrow	-	-	1.63m	0.07m
	[809]	Cut	Cut of linear gully, equal sides and curved base. Remnant of furrow	-	-	1.63m	0.07m
	(810)	Fill	Fill of [811], light brown/grey silty clay with flint gravels	-	-	0.40m	0.18m
	[811]	Cut	Cut of linear gully, equal sides and curved base.	-	-	0.40m	0.18m

Trench	Context	Туре	Description	Sample No.	Finds	Width (m)	Depth (m)
	(812)	Fill	Fill of [813], light brown/grey silty clay with flint gravels	3	-	1.80m	0.35m
	[813]	Cut	Cut of linear gully, equal sides and curved base.	-	-	1.80m	0.35m
	(814)	Fill	Fill of [813], light brown/grey silty clay with flint gravels	4	-	1.28m	0.40m
	[815]	Cut	Cut of linear gully, equal sides and curved base.	-	-	1.28m	0.40m
9	(901)	Layer	Tarmac	-	-	-	0.06m
	(902)	Layer	Yellow gravel	-	-	-	0.10m
	(903)	Layer	Black gravel	-	-	-	0.16m
	(904)	Layer	Yellow gravel	-	-	-	0.12m
	(905)	Layer	Black layer	-	-	-	0.06m
	(906)	Layer	Crushed brick rubble	-	-	-	0.12m
	(907)	Layer	Dark grey clay	-	-	-	0.20m
	(908)	Layer	Black silty clay	-	-	-	0.06m
	(909)	Natural	Stained orange brown clay sand flint gravel	-	-	-	0.80m-0.88m
	(910)	Gravel	Orange/brown gravel				0.60m-0.66m
10	(1001)	Layer	Tarmac	-	-	-	0.06m
	(1002)	Layer	Yellow gravel	-	-	-	0.10m
	(1003)	Layer	Black gravel	-	-	-	0.16m
	(1004)	Layer	Yellow gravel	-	-	-	0.12m

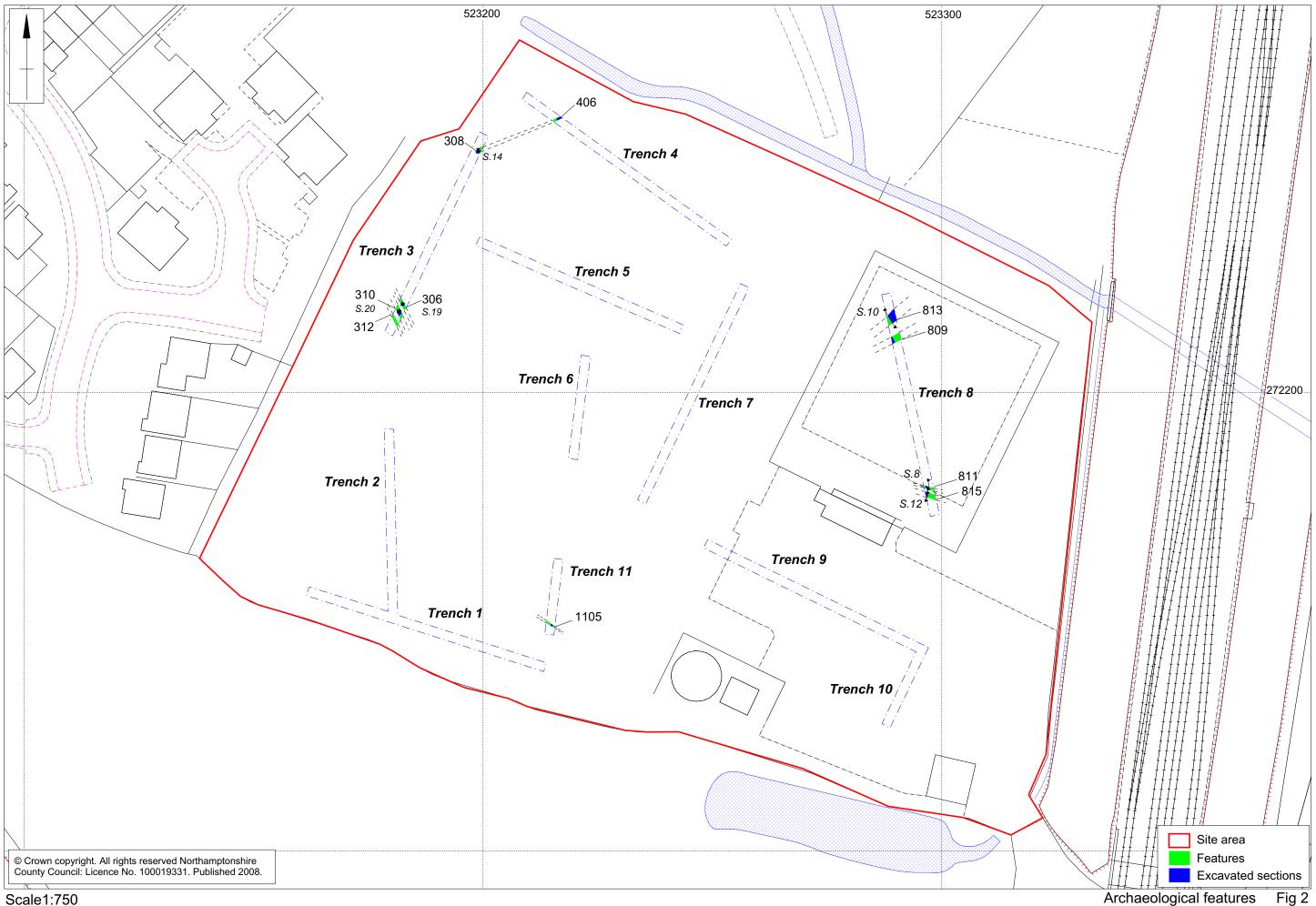
Trench	Context	Туре	Description	Sample No.	Finds	Width (m)	Depth (m)
	(1005)	Layer	Black layer	-	-	-	0.06m
	(1006)	Layer	Crushed brick rubble	-	-	-	0.12m
	(1007)	Layer	Dark grey clay	-	-	-	0.20m
	(1008)	Layer	Black silty clay	-	-	-	0.06m
	(1009)	Natural	Stained orange brown clay sand flint gravel	-	-	-	0.80m-0.88m
11	(1101)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and high root content	-	-	-	0.40m
	(1102)	Subsoil	Light brown silty clay with flints	-	-	-	0.40m-0.50m
	(1103)	Natural	Orange brown clay sand flint gravel	-	-	-	0.80m-0.90m
	(1104)	Fill	Fill of [1105], light brown/grey silty clay with flint gravels	-	-	0.30m	0.15m
	[1105]	Cut	Step sided cut with u-shaped profile and rounded base	-	-	0.30m	0.15m

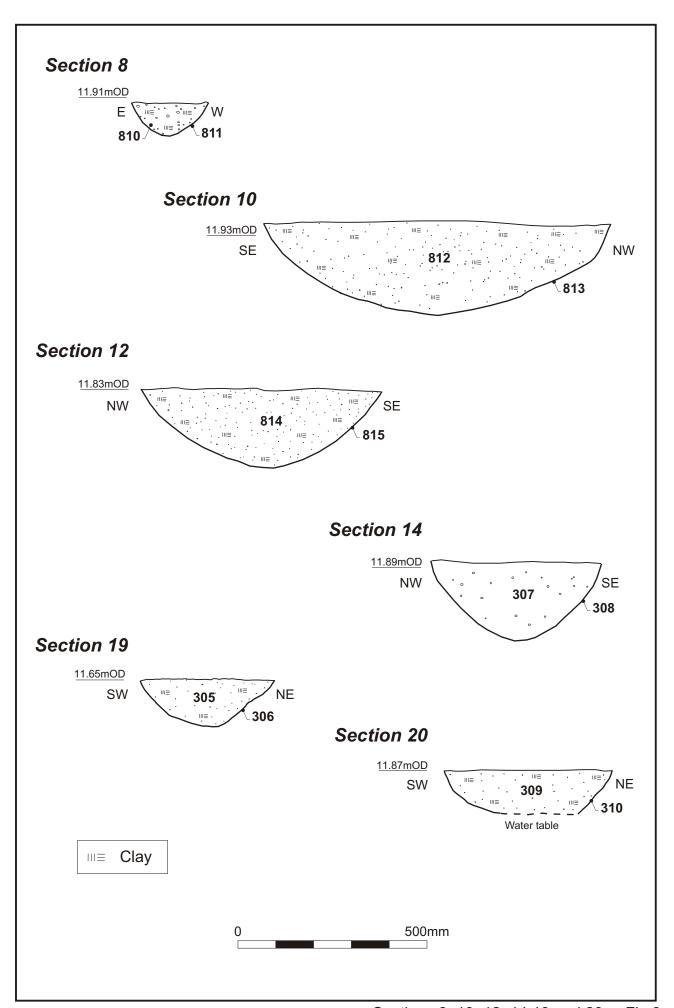






Scale 1:15,000 Site Location Fig 1





Sections 8, 10, 12, 14,19 and 20