



**Northamptonshire  
County Council**

# **Northamptonshire Archaeology**

## **Archaeological Investigation**

**of land at Terriers Farm,**

**High Wycombe,**

**Buckinghamshire**

**August 2007**



Emma Rae

September 2007

Report 07/144

Planning Application 05/07481/OUTEA

### **Northamptonshire Archaeology**

2 Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park

Northampton NN4 8BE

t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822

e. [sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

w. [www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk)



**STAFF**

Project Manager Adam Yates BA AIFA

Fieldwork Emma Rae BA

Rob Smith

Text Emma Rae

Pottery Andy Chapman BSc MIFA

Illustrations Jacqueline Harding BA HND

Charlotte Stevens BSc AIFA

**QUALITY CONTROL**

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified by	Adam Yates		
Approved by	Bill Boismier		

## OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Archaeological investigation of land at Terriers Farm, High Wycombe	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Three trenches were excavated by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Terriers Farm, High Wycombe on behalf of CgMs Consulting.. A small number of features including two shallow gullies, a more substantial ditch and four postholes were uncovered. These correspond with the general location of a number of anomalies identified by geophysical survey, although none of them directly correlated with any of the geophysical anomalies.	
Project type	Evaluation	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (JSAC 342/98/001) Geophysical survey (GSB 2005/62)	
Current Land use	Under crop	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	-	
Significant finds	Pottery, Iron Age	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Buckinghamshire	
Site address (including postcode)	Terriers Farm, Kingshill Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	120 sq.m	
OS Easting & Northing	SU 8810 9530	
Height OD	175 -165 AOD	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service	
Project Design originator	CgMs Consulting	
Director/Supervisor	Emma Rae, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Adam Yates, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	Cooper Partnership	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	29 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	
End date	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2007	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	Buckinghamshire Museum 2007.134	Pottery
Paper	Buckinghamshire Museum 2007.134	Context file and site registers 1 plan and section sheet
Digital	Buckinghamshire Museum 2007.134	PDF of report and illustrations.
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Archaeological Investigation of Land at Terriers Farm, High Wycombe		
Title		
Serial title & volume		
Author(s)	Emma Rae	
Page numbers		
Date	September 2007	

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>2</b>
	2.1 Topography and geology	2
	2.2 Archaeological background	2
<b>3</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>3</b>
	3.1 Objectives	3
	3.2 Methodology	3
<b>4</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>4</b>
	4.1 General stratigraphic sequence	4
	4.2 Archaeological features	4
<b>5</b>	<b>THE FINDS</b>	<b>6</b>
	5.1 The Iron Age pottery by Andy Chapman	6
<b>6</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS</b>	<b>8</b>

## Figures

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Digitised trench plans and geophysical anomalies

Fig 3: Sections and Plans

## Plates

Frontispiece: Mechanical Excavation of Trench 1

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION  
OF LAND AT TERRIERS FARM,  
HIGH WYCOMBE  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
AUGUST 2007**

***ABSTRACT***

*Three trenches were excavated by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land at Terriers Farm, High Wycombe on behalf of CgMs Consulting. A small number of features including two shallow gullies, a more substantial ditch and four post holes were uncovered. These correspond with the general location of a number of anomalies identified by geophysical survey, although none of them directly correlated with any of the geophysical anomalies.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Archaeological investigation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology for CgMs Consulting in August of 2007 on land at Terriers Farm, Kingshill Road, High Wycombe (NGR: SU 8810 9530; Fig 1).

The fieldwork was designed to meet the requirements of the Project Design issued by CgMs (CgMs 2007) and in response to a Project Brief from Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service issued in response to planning application 05/07481/OUTEA. The site archive has been issued the accession code 2007.134 by Buckinghamshire Museums.

Previous fieldwork relating to this land has included a desk based assessment (JSAC 1998) which concluded the site had low potential for archaeological remains and a geophysical survey (GSB 2005) which suggested an enclosure of some form was present within the specified area.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Topography and geology**

The site at Terriers Farm occupies approximately 35ha to the north of High Wycombe (Fig 1). It is bounded to the north and west by minor roads, and to the east and south by field boundaries. Land use is mixed farmland, pasture and arable. The site slopes from c175m AOD in the north to c165m AOD in the south.

The drift geology in the area consists of plateau drift and clay with flints, giving rise to fine silty over clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils of the 582a Batcombe soil association (SSEW 1983).

### **2.2 Archaeological background**

A full archaeological background of the area can be found in the desk-based assessment (JSAC 342/98/001) and is summarised in the brief for archaeological evaluation prepared by Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service (BCAS 2007), from which the following is extracted:

Prehistoric occupation patterns on the Chiltern dip slope are poorly understood (Kidd, 2007), and whilst Paleolithic flints (CAS6248, CAS6249) and Neolithic and Bronze Age flints (CAS6131) have been recovered from the vicinity of the site, the potential for prehistoric deposits in this location would appear to be low.

A Roman occupation site (CAS1193) and two Roman findspots (CAS5956 and CAS5951) are known 500m to the north and 800m to the west of the site, although it is likely that Iron Age and Roman occupation was considerably denser than that reflected by recorded findspots (Kidd 2007; Zeepvat and Radford 2007). A consideration of existing evidence would point to moderate potential for Roman deposits at the Terriers Farm site.

Medieval occupation in the area is demonstrated by the deserted medieval village at Grange Farm (CAS2128) to the north and the moated site and manor at Rochalls Farm (CAS0275) to the north-west. Potential medieval earthworks have been identified at Kings Wood (CAS1660) and Millfield Wood (CAS6634). The Terriers Farm site was probably agricultural land on the border of the three parish boundaries which intersect at the north east corner of the site. A consideration of existing evidence would point to low / moderate potential for medieval deposits at the Terriers Farm site.

Geophysical survey of the site (GSB 2005) has identified a series of anomalies of potential

archaeological origin, forming an apparent horseshoe shape. The current trial works are targeted on these features.

### **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:

- Establish the nature and function of the horseshoe-shaped feature identified by the geophysical survey;
- Provide further information on the historic character of the development site;
- Assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits encountered;
- Place the remains within their local, regional and national context;
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Buckinghamshire SMR.

#### **3.2 Methodology**

The evaluation trenches were located by SMG grade GPS (Leica System 100). The hay, which was drying on the field, was pushed away from the designated trenching area with the machine prior to excavation. The topsoil was removed by a JCB excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, operating under 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 (Fig 2).

After consultation with the Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service representative it was decided that environmental sampling of features was not necessary.

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 natural geology of the site was plateau drift and clay with flints. This was sealed below a layer of light brown silty clay subsoil with high flint content. This was covered in a layer of mid brown silty clay topsoil with a very high flint content and a significant degree of organic material. The topsoil and subsoil together constituted an overburden approximately 450mm thick. All of the archaeological features found within the trenches were cut into the natural geology and sealed by the subsoil.

### 4.2 Archaeological features

Three different trenches were excavated in total and each revealed archaeology. For the purpose of clarity each trench will be discussed separately (Figs 2-3).

#### *Trench 1*

Trench 1 ran on an north-east, to south-west alignment and was 50 m long by 1.8m wide. Natural geology (103) was at a depth of approximately 400mm and was orange brown clay with flints.

At the south-western end of the trench there was a small posthole [105] which had a diameter of approximately 0.44m and a depth of 0.8m. This feature had a wide 'U'-shaped profile with equally graduated sides and a concave base (Fig 3 section 1). The fill (104) was medium brown silty clay with flints, there were no finds.

To the north-east end of Trench 1 there were an additional two postholes. The first [107] was 0.46m wide and 0.10m deep with equally graduated sides, a curved base and its fill (106) was light brown silty clay with flints (Fig 3 section 2). A small amount of Iron Age pottery was found within fill (106). The second posthole [111] was further to the north and only partly exposed. It was 0.41m in diameter and 0.10m in depth (Fig 3 section 4). The (110) was light brown silty clay with flints and contained a small amount of Iron Age pottery.

Shallow gully [109] measuring 0.70m in diameter and 0.18m in depth had a light brown silty clay fill (108) with flints (Fig 3 section 3). There were no finds within this fill.

All of the above features were overlain by the subsoil which was consistently 0.20m - 0.25m in depth. Topsoil sealed the subsoil and was 0.16m - 0.18m thick throughout the trench.



### ***Trench 2***

Trench 2 lay on a north-west to south-east alignment and measured 50m in length by 1.8m in width. Natural geology was present at approximately 0.40m and was again orange brown clay with flints. The features within Trench 2 were again cut into the natural geology.

There were two features within this trench, the first located in the southern half of the trench was a small post hole [205] measuring 0.30m in diameter by 0.60m in depth (Fig 3 section 5). This feature had uniform sides and a curved base, however, it was slightly more oval in shape than the two postholes in Trench 1. The fill (204) of [205] was dark silty clay and had some small flecks of charcoal, but produced no finds.

The second feature was a ditch [208] located in the very north of the trench. The ditch came from the west then turned towards the north and butt ended. It was 1m in width and 0.30m in depth against the baulk (Fig 3 section 6), but narrowed and shallowed towards the butt end [210] where it measures 0.40m in width by 0.08m in depth (Fig 3 section 7). There were two fills present in the section closer to the baulk, the lower fill (207) was a mottled grey-brown silty clay with some sandy patches and the upper fill (206) was dark brown grey silty clay with some charcoal, there were no finds in either of the fills. There was just one fill (209) present in the butt end section [210] of the ditch which was a dark grey brown silty clay with small amounts of charcoal (equivalent to (206)).

All of the features were overlain by the subsoil which ranged from 0.15m to 0.22m throughout the trench. The topsoil was between 0.16m and 0.22m in thickness and directly overlaid the subsoil.

### ***Trench 3***

Trench 3 was on an east-west alignment and was 20m in length by 1.8m in width. Natural geology was present at 0.40m – 0.45m and was an orange brown clay with flints as in the other trenches. There was just one feature which was cut into the natural geology.

A shallow gully [305] crossed the trench on a north-south alignment. It had a wide U-shaped profile with equally graduated sides and a concave, regular base (Fig 3 section 8). The fill (304) was light brown silty clay with flints, there were no finds present. The alignment of [305] suggested if it was continuous it would appear in Trench 1, this however, was not the case and it can therefore be presumed the gully comes to an end somewhere in the space between Trenches 1 and 3 or that it changed direction.

## **5 THE FINDS**

### **5.1 The Iron Age pottery**

by Andy Chapman

Two postholes in Trench 1 produced small quantities of pottery. Context 107, the fill of posthole [106] contained two sherds and three small fragments, weighing 15g, while context (110), the fill of posthole [111], contained three sherds and three small fragments, weighing 10g.

The sherds all come from hand-built vessels in a fabric containing sparse pieces of flint. They all have dark grey-black cores and in the few cases where any original surface survives, these are brown.

This small group of poorly preserved pottery offers few diagnostic features, but the fabric and inclusions would be appropriate for material dating to the Iron Age.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

The geophysical survey undertaken on the site indicated part of an enclosure ditch may be present, this however turned out to be a geological anomaly. Although the trial trenching identified a series of archaeological features in this location, none of them were related with this geological anomaly.

Ditch/gully [109] at the eastern end of Trench 1 approximated the proposed location of one arm of the horseshoe enclosure, however, it did not continue into Trench 2 and did not curve to the south to reappear in the western side of Trench 1 as the geophysics results suggested it might. Linear features [208] in Trench 2 and [305] in Trench 3 and do not correlate with the supposed enclosure ditch.

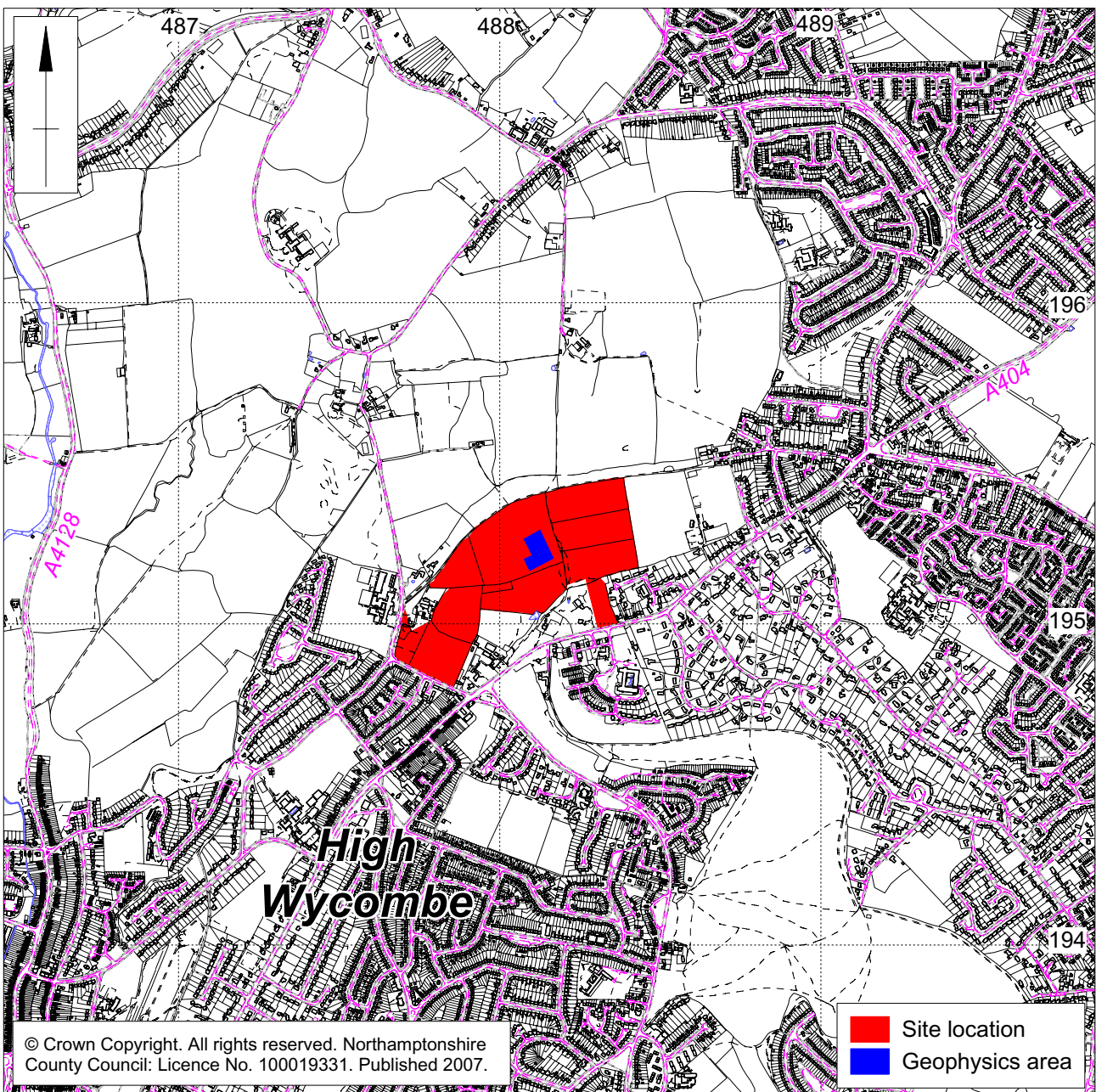
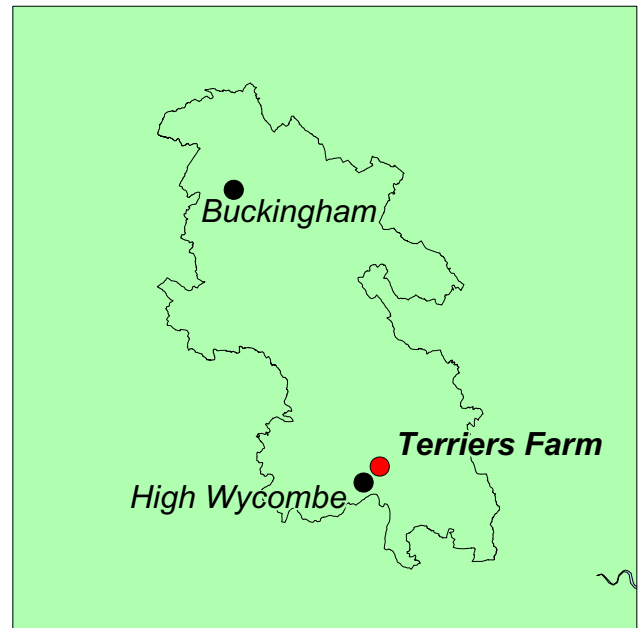
There were also four postholes found in Trenches 1 and 2, two of which [105] and [205] were completely isolated from any other visible archaeology and had no associated dating evidence. Interpreting the purpose of these postholes is made difficult by their isolation. The other postholes [107] and [111] were located close together in Trench 1 and in close proximity to ditch [109], which produced the only artefactual material recovered, Iron Age pottery. It may be speculated that these postholes formed part of a structure on the internal side of the enclosure, however, with the information that has been gathered it is difficult to offer a more in depth interpretation as to the purpose of these features.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BCAS 2007 *Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation (Trial Trenching), High Wycombe, Terriers Farm*
- CgMs 2007 *Specification for an Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation, Land at: Terriers Farm High Wycombe*
- English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition
- English Heritage 2002 *Environmental archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation*
- IFA 1999 (revised 2001) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*, Institute of Field Archaeologists
- IFA 1985 (revised 2000) *Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists*, Institute of Field Archaeologists
- GSB 2005 *Terriers Farm*, report **2005/62**
- JSAC 1998 *A desk based Archaeological Assessment of land at Terriers Farm, High Wycombe*
- Kidd, S, 2007 Later Bronze Age and Iron Age Buckinghamshire: Draft Historic Environment Research Assessment. *Solent Thames Research Journal*
- Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983 *Soils of England and Wales, Sheet 3, Midland and Western England*, Harpenden.
- Zeepvat, B and Radford, D 2007 *Roman Buckinghamshire: Draft Historic Environment Research Assessment*

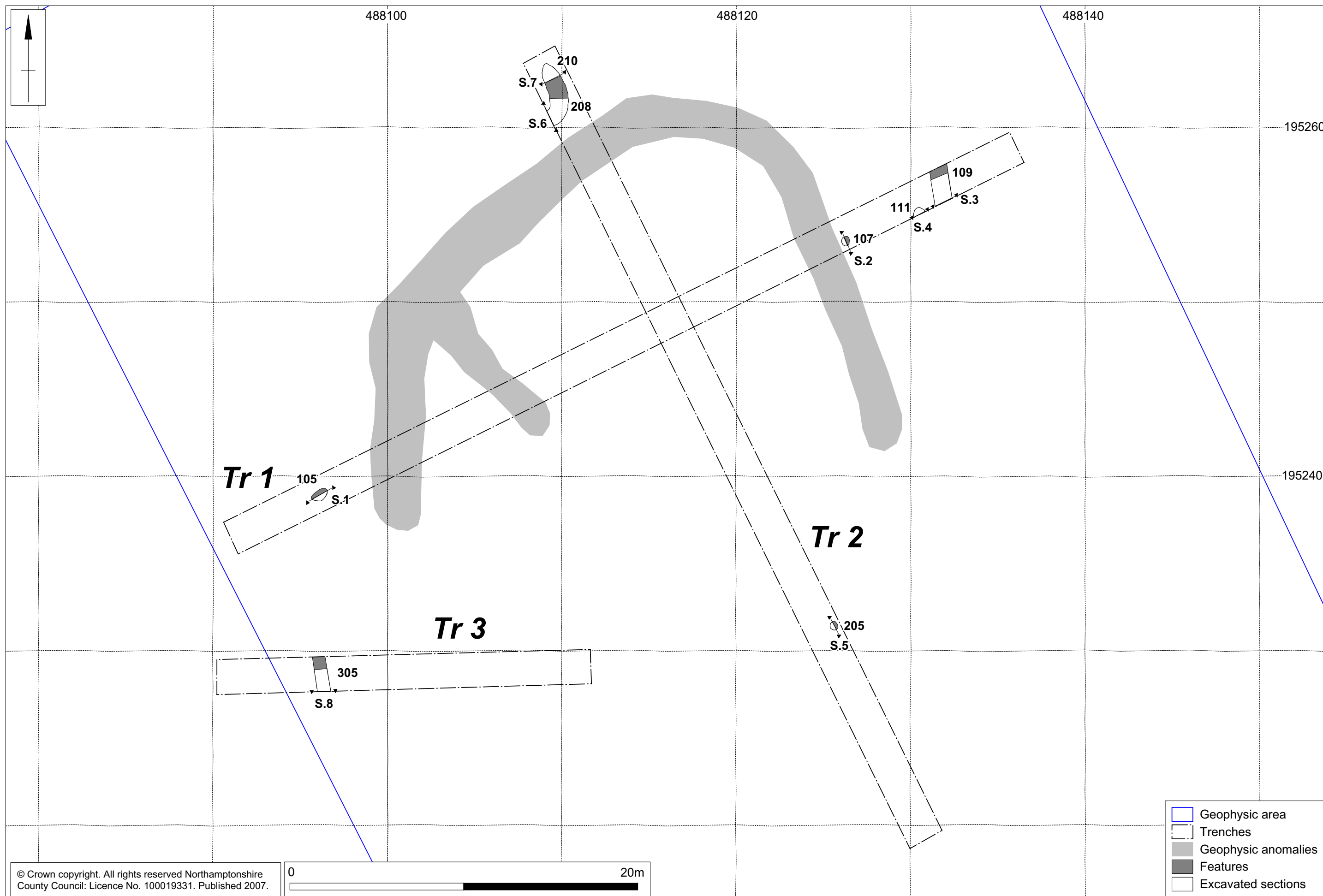
## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context	Type	Description	Finds	Width (m)	Depth (m)
1	(101)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and high root content	-	-	0.2-0.25m
	(102)	Subsoil	Light brown silty clay with flints	-	-	0.15-0.20m
	(103)	Natural	Orange brown clay with flints	-	-	-
	(104)	Fill	Fill of [105], brown silty clay with flints	-	0.40m	0.10m
	[105]	Cut	Cut of posthole, equal sides, curved base	-	0.40m	0.10m
	(106)	Fill	Fill of [107], brown silty clay with flints	-	0.45m	0.11m
	[107]	Cut	Cut of post hole, shallow, equal sides, curved base	IA pottery	0.45m	0.11m
	(108)	Fill	Fill of [109], light brown silty clay with flints	-	0.70m	0.20m
	[109]	Cut	Cut of enclosure ditch, shallow, equal sides, curved base	-	0.70m	0.20m
	(110)	Fill	Fill [111], mid grey brown silty clay with flints. Pot within fill	IA pottery	0.40m	0.10m
	[111]	Cut	Cut of posthole, equal sides, curved base	-	0.40m	0.10m
2	(201)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and high root content	-	-	0.30m
	(202)	Subsoil	Light brown silty clay with flints	-	-	0.21m
	(203)	Natural	Orange brown clay with flints	-	-	-
	(204)	Fill	Fill of [205], dark brown silty clay with flints, some charcoal	-	0.28m	0.07m
	[205]	Cut	Cut of posthole, equal sides, curved base	-	0.28m	0.07m
	(206)	Fill	Primary fill of [208], mottled grey-brown to grey colour, silty clay with silty sand patches	-	0.75m	0.30m
	(207)	Fill	Secondary fill of [208], dark brown - blackish-grey silty clay, some charcoal	-	0.45m	0.18m
	[208]	Cut	Cut of Ditch, northern side steeper than southern, curved base.	-	1m	0.30m
	(209)	Fill	Fill of [210], mid brown silty clay with flint and charcoal.	-	-	-
	[210]	Cut	Cut of ditch buttend, shallow, equal sides and slightly curved base.	-	0.30m	0.09m
3	(301)	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay with flints and high root content	-	-	0.20m
	(302)	Subsoil	Light brown silty clay with flints	-	-	0.25m
	(303)	Natural	Orange brown clay with flints	-	-	-
	(304)	Fill	Fill of [305], light brown silty clay with flints	-	0.95m	0.12m
	[305]	Cut	Cut of linear shallow gully, equal sides and slightly curved base.	-	0.95m	0.12m



Scale 1:20,000

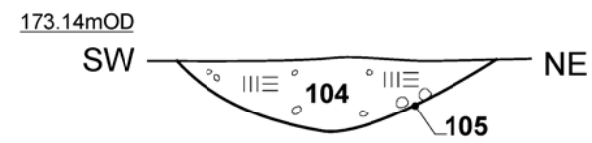
Site location Fig 1



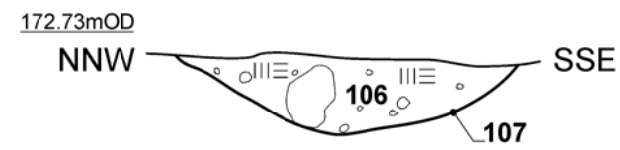
Scale 1:200

Plan of trenches with geophysics results and excavated features Fig 2

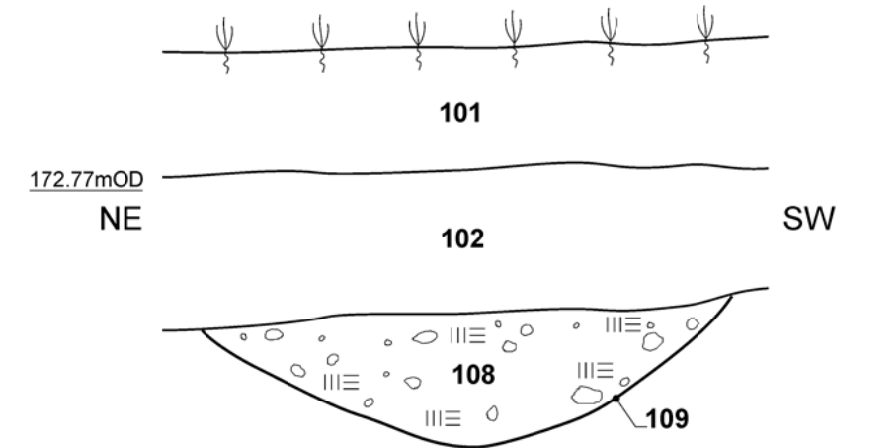
**Section 1 - Trench 1**



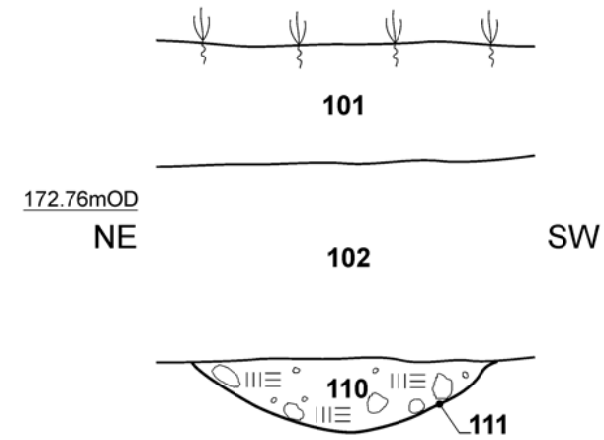
**Section 2 - Trench 1**



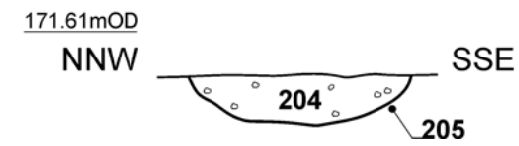
**Section 3 - Trench 1**



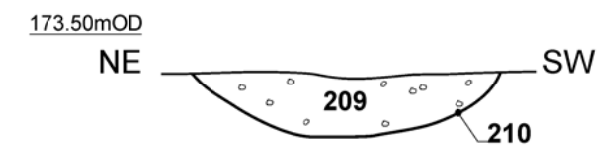
**Section 4 - Trench 1**



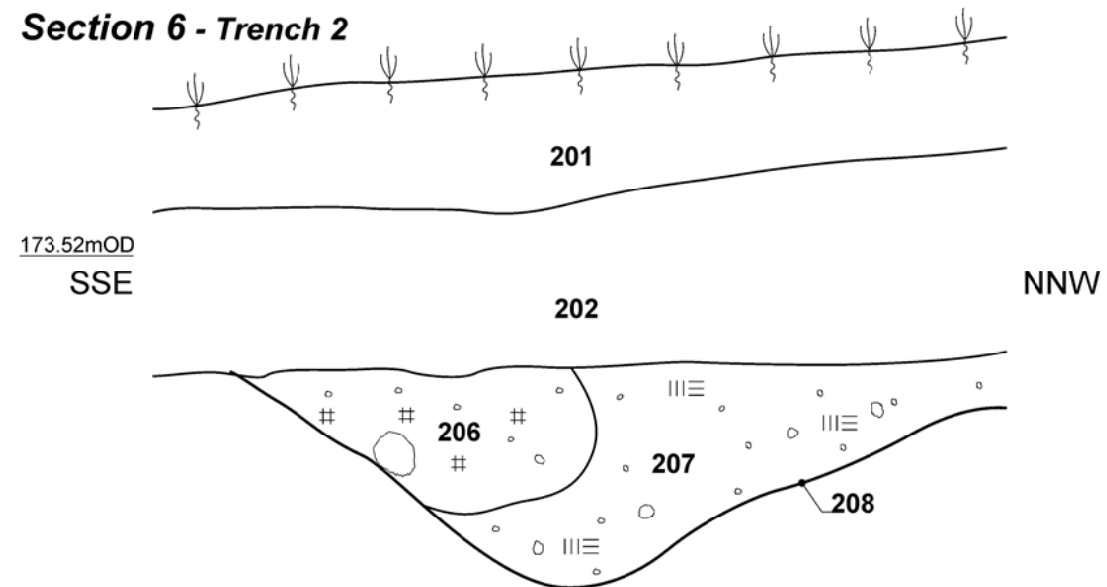
**Section 5 - Trench 2**



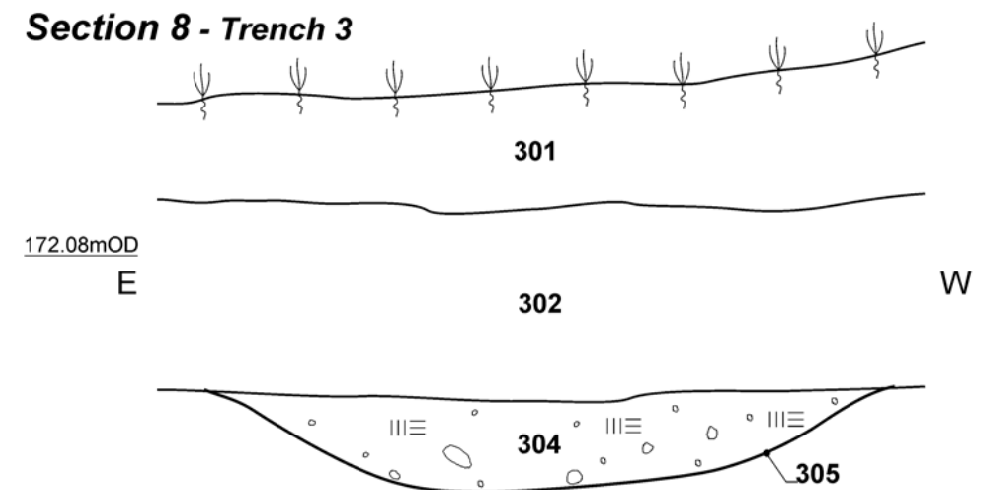
**Section 7 - Trench 2**



**Section 6 - Trench 2**



**Section 8 - Trench 3**



Sections from Trenches 1-3 Fig 3