



Northamptonshire  
County Council

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological evaluation  
at Park View Close, Broughton Astley  
Leicestershire  
X.A1.2008

January 2008



Emma Rae

January 2008

Report 08/19

## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>                                 |  |  |
| Project title  | Archaeological evaluation at Park View Close, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire   |  |
| Short description<br>(250 words maximum)               | Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological trial trenching evaluation on land at Park View Close Broughton Astley, Leicestershire. No archaeological remains were present. The evaluation trenches revealed that the area had been used to deposit building rubble from the development of the surrounding housing estate. |  |
| Project type<br>(e.g. DBA, evaluation etc)             | Field Evaluation – Trial Trenching   |  |
| Site status<br>(none, NT, SAM etc)                     | None   |  |
| Previous work<br>(SMR numbers etc)                     | None   |  |
| Current land use                                       | Vacant Lot   |  |
| Future work<br>(yes, no, unknown)                      | Unknown  |  |
| Monument type/period                                   | None   |  |
| Significant finds<br>(artefact type and period)        | None   |  |
| <b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>                                |  |  |
| County   | Leicestershire   |  |
| Site address<br>(including postcode)                   | Park View Close, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire  |  |
| Study area (sq.m or ha)                                | 0.15ha   |  |
| OS Easting & Northing<br>(use grid square letter code) | SP 527 926   |  |
| Height OD  |  |  |
| <b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>                                |  |  |
| Organisation   | Northamptonshire Archaeology   |  |
| Project brief originator                               | Merriman Ltd   |  |
| Project Design originator                              | Northamptonshire Archaeology   |  |
| Director/Supervisor                                    | Emma Rae   |  |
| Project Manager  | Tony Walsh   |  |
| Sponsor or funding body                                | Merriman Ltd   |  |
| <b>PROJECT DATE</b>                                    |  |  |
| Start date   | 21 January 2008  |  |
| End date   |  |  |
| <b>ARCHIVES</b>  | <b>Location<br/>(Accession no.)</b>  | <b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)</b> |
| Physical   | X.A1.2008  | Slate tile, residual, possibly medieval.       |
| Paper  |  |  |
| Digital  |  |  |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>                                    | Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)  |  |
| Title  | Archaeological evaluation at Park View Close, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire   |  |
| Serial title & volume                                  | 08/19  |  |
| Author(s)  | Emma Rae   |  |
| Page numbers   | 12 plus figures  |  |
| Date   | 11/02/08   |  |

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Report cover: Trench two, looking south

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
AT  
PARK VIEW CLOSE, BROUGHTON ASTLEY  
LEICESTERSHIRE  
JANUARY 2008**

**X.A1.2008**

*ABSTRACT*

*Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological trial trenching evaluation on land at Park View Close Broughton Astley, Leicestershire.*

*No archaeological remains were found. The evaluation trenches revealed that the area had been used to deposit building rubble, most probably from the development of the surrounding housing estate. Two slate tiles, which are probably medieval in date, were recovered from a residual (modern) context in trench one.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Archaeological evaluation comprising trial trenching was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology in January 2008 for Merriman Ltd on land at Park View Close, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 527 926; Fig 1).

The work was undertaken in order to inform a planning application for the construction of residential dwellings (planning application: 07/01686/FUL). The evaluation met the requirements of an agreed specification written by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2008) following the Brief for Archaeological Evaluation, and subsequent programme of post-excavation works, issued by Leicestershire County Council (LCCHNET 2007).

The purpose of the evaluation was to identify any evidence for the survival of archaeological features on the site and to characterise any related remains.

## **2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

The development site is located in the village of Broughton Astley, south of Leicester (Fig 1) and is 0.15ha in size. The site is bounded by the White Horse Pub to the north, St Mary's Church to the west and residential housing to the south and east. The ground, largely undulating, slopes down from the east.

The underlying geology consists of sand with clay and gravel alluvium of the quaternary system overlying mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone group (Geological Survey of England and Wales, Coventry, Sheet 169).

## **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The site is located within the heart of the village of Broughton Astley in Leicestershire. Broughton Astley has a medieval and post-medieval history (NA 2008). The area which is now known as Broughton Astley consisted in 900 AD of three Danish or Saxon communities named Brocton, Sutton and Thorpe. In 1086 the village housed 34 families. By 1800 a thriving hosiery industry had been built within the area.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record has been consulted to determine the historical and archaeological significance of the immediate and wider areas surrounding the evaluation site (Fig 4) (Table 1).

On the western boundary of the site lies St Mary's Church, a Grade II listed building with a chancel dating to the late 13th century and the rest of the church dating the early 14th century. The church was restored in 1882 by W. Bassett Smith of London.

The most significant archaeology within the immediate area is the White Horse Inn (MLE1317). This was an 18th – 19th century public house which may have included the remains of a manor house, fishponds and a dovecote (which may predate the Inn). This inn has now been developed into a modern pub called the White Horse and lies immediately north of the site.

Other areas of possible archaeological interest in the wider area include:

- Medieval watermill (MLE1304)
- Post-medieval field boundaries and field systems (MLE1301)
- Post-medieval country house (MLE1319)

**Table 1: Historic Environment Record Data**

| HER NO   | NGR (TL)    | DESCRIPTION  |
|----------|-------------|--|
| MLE1301  | SP 526 923  | Earthworks of old field boundaries, probably post-medieval                         |
| MLE1302  | SP 525 923  | Documentary evidence for post-medieval windmill                                    |
| MLE1304  | SP527 924   | Possible site of medieval watermill  |
| MLE1305  | SP527 924   | Watermill, post-medieval to modern   |
| MLE1306  | SP527 927   | Former earthworks of medieval village, now levelled                                |
| MLE1317  | SP527 926   | White Horse Inn, likely to have been medieval                                      |
| MLE1319  | SP 527 921  | Documentary evidence for a late post -medieval hall                                |
| MLE1320  | SP524 926   | Post -medieval garden earthworks   |
| MLE7343  | SP5271 9265 | Findspot, 17 <sup>th</sup> century coin found at White Horse Inn                   |
| MLE9437  | SP 526 926  | Historic core of medieval village deducted from historic mapping                   |
| MLE9445  | SP 524 932  | Historic core of medieval village (Primethorpe) deducted from historic mapping     |
| MLE9447  | SP526 925   | Four sherd of medieval pottery recovered during watching brief at 65 Old Mill Road |
| MLE9448  | SP526 928   | Cobbled road surface, north of the church  |
| MLE10982 | SP526 926   | St Mary's Church   |

## 4 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

### Objectives

The purpose of the work was to gather sufficient evidence to establish, supplement, improve and make available information about archaeological deposits in relation to the current development proposals. This was achieved through the:

- Identification of any evidence of the survival of buried archaeological remains on the site which may be threatened by development of the site and area
- Determination of the depth of burial, character, date, extent and state of preservation of any such remains

### **Methodology**

The evaluation area was located by hand with taped measurements from known points on the site. The topsoil and all other overburden were removed by a mechanical mini-digger, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket operating under archaeological supervision.

Mechanical excavation proceeded as far as the natural substrate or the first significant archaeological horizon or until the trenches had reached a depth of approximately c1.2m, due to health and safety considerations, which were the instability of the trench sides and presence of surface water. At the close of all fieldwork the trenches were mechanically backfilled.

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).

All site Health and Safety followed Northamptonshire Archaeology Guidelines (NCCNH 2003)

## **5 RESULTS**

Four trial trenches were excavated, with a total length of 38.5m. No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered in any of the trenches, however, several layers of rubble backfill were encountered with each trench revealing a separate sequence of rubble deposition. For the purpose of clarity each trench will be discussed separately.

### **Trench One**

Trench one was located in the north-eastern corner of the site and was on an east – west alignment. The trench was originally specified to be 10m in length, however, it was shortened to approximately 8.5m to allow enough room for the mini digger to safely excavate without damaging the boundary fence.

This trench was excavated to a depth of approximately 1.30m. An area of darker material was revealed at this level; however, upon investigation it was clear that this was a result of vegetation disturbance. Due to health and safety considerations the undisturbed natural geology was not revealed within this trench.

Five layers of rubble backfill were revealed within this trench (Fig 3). At the base of the trench was a light greyish orange silty sand deposit (107). Overlying (107) was a dark grey



sandy silt with some gravel inclusions (106) measuring 0.20m thick. Overlying this was a mid grey brown sandy silt (105), 0.35m thick with inclusions of gravel, brick fragments, pieces of plastic bag, slate fragments and two slate roof tiles. Above this was (104), a dark brown grey sandy silt with frequent inclusions of modern brick fragments and slate fragments, 0.17m thick. Overlying this was a layer of mid greyish brown sandy silt (102), 0.18m thick which had far fewer inclusions than the rest of the rubble deposits within this trench. This was overlain by the topsoil, brownish grey sandy silt, 0.22m thick.

A land drain was revealed in the western end of the trench. The drain was made from cobbles and gravel and had small pieces of plastic included in its makeup.

### **Trench Two**

Trench two was located through the centre of the site on a north south alignment and was approximately 20m in length. There was no archaeology revealed within this trench.

At the north end of the trench the natural geology was a blue grey clay, revealed at a depth of approximately 1.2m.

At the south end of the trench was (206) a hard compact rubble layer 0.14m thick with inclusions of gravel, modern brick fragments, tarmac/bitumen and concrete (Fig 3). This layer appeared only at the southern end of the trench and was so compact that the digger was unable to break through it, hence excavation stopped in this area at this level. Cut into (206) was a modern pit [208], which contained (207), a lens of clay and organic material that was quite peaty in places and was approximately 0.10m thick. A modern metal stake protruded from the trench side within this context. Above this was (205) which was rubble, containing bricks, pipe fragments and Hessian and plastic bags.

Overlying both (205) and (206) was (204) which was continuous throughout the trench. This context was 0.36m thick and consisted of very dark brown silty clay with high inclusions of modern brick fragments and sandstone. Other inclusions were pieces of plastic, metal wiring and hessian bags/sacks.

In the southern end of the trench (203) overlay (204) and was a medium brown lens of rubble material with inclusions of brick, slate and plastic. This layer was 0.20m thick.

Both (203) and (204) were overlain by (202) which was 0.24m thick and was a distinctively pink clay with inclusions of brown clay patches, rocks, pebbles, slate and brick fragments.

Sealing (202) was a layer of topsoil which consistently measured between 0.18m and 0.20m thick and was a dark brownish grey sandy silt.

### **Trench Three**

Trench three was located in the central area of the site, aligned approximately north-south and measured 5m in length.

The natural geology was reached at a depth of approximately 1.10m and was a blue grey clay. Overlying the natural was a layer of very dark organic silt (305) (Fig 3). This layer was interpreted as a buried topsoil (grass could still be observed in the very top of this layer). A similar metal stake to that found in trench 2 was found within this context, as well as fragments of woven plastic sacks and plastic bags.

Overlying (305) was (304), a thin lens of grey brown gravel measuring between 0.15m – 0.20m thick.

Above (304) was yellow orange gravel (303) approximately 0.30m thick. Overlying both (303) and (304) was (302) a layer of mid brown silty clay with rubble inclusions of sandstone fragments, brick, metal plastic and cobbles approximately 0.22m thick.

The topsoil overlay (303) and (302) and was a mid brown grey silty sand approximately 0.20m thick.

### **Trench Four**

Trench four was located to the western side of the site and was approximately 5m in length. The natural geology was revealed at a depth of approximately 0.80m and was a blue grey clay.

Just one modern layer was revealed within this trench. Above the natural clay was a rubble layer (402) approximately 0.40m – 0.50m thick. This layer consisted of a pink clay with

inclusions of brick, sandstone and cobbles. This layer was very similar to the rubble layer (202) in Trench Two.

Overlying (402) was the topsoil (401) which was a mid grey sand silt between 0.20m – 0.30m thick.

## **6 FINDS**

### **Slate roof tile** by Pat Chapman BA CMS AIFA

Two slate roof tiles were recovered from context (105). A rectangular tile measuring 190mm by 160mm, with a neatly drilled hole 10mm in diameter, and an asymmetrical diamond 320mm x 270mm with two pegholes 32mm apart, 7mm and 5mm in diameter. Each of the tiles was 20mm thick. The rough diamond shape would be used in the main part of the roof, while the rectangular tile would be used up the side.

These two tiles are most probably made from Swithland slate, used by the Romans and then during the medieval into modern periods. The methods used to shape the slates was almost identical by both Roman and medieval slaters. The blank slate would be flaked to the required shape, the difference usually being that the Romans tended to flake one side only, while medieval tiles were flaked both sides, though it is not always easy to tell.

However, the pegholes on these tiles have been neatly drilled, or bored, which suggests that these tiles are medieval. Roman and modern slate pegholes are made by creating a depression with a chisel then a sharp blow with a pointed tool perforates the slate removing a flake from the reverse.

These two slate tiles are residual, but their origin is most likely to be medieval.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

Although the trench was located within an area with the potential to contain medieval archaeology no deposits or features of archaeological interest were found. Two slate tiles, which are probably medieval in date, were recovered from a residual (modern) context in trench one.

Most of the site appears to have been built up in modern times by the importation of material. In each of the four trial trenches were a series of rubble deposits which contained modern inclusions such as brick, slate fragments, concrete, tarmac/bitumen, plastic and scrap metal. It is likely that these deposits have come about due to the surrounding land being developed into a new housing estate and pub, with the rubbish and rubble from these developments being disposed of on this small remaining plot of land.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

BGS *Sheet 169 Coventry, Soil Survey of England and Wales*, British Geological Survey

IFA 1999 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

IFA 1999 Code of Conduct, Standards, Guidelines and Practices of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, Institute of Field Archaeologists

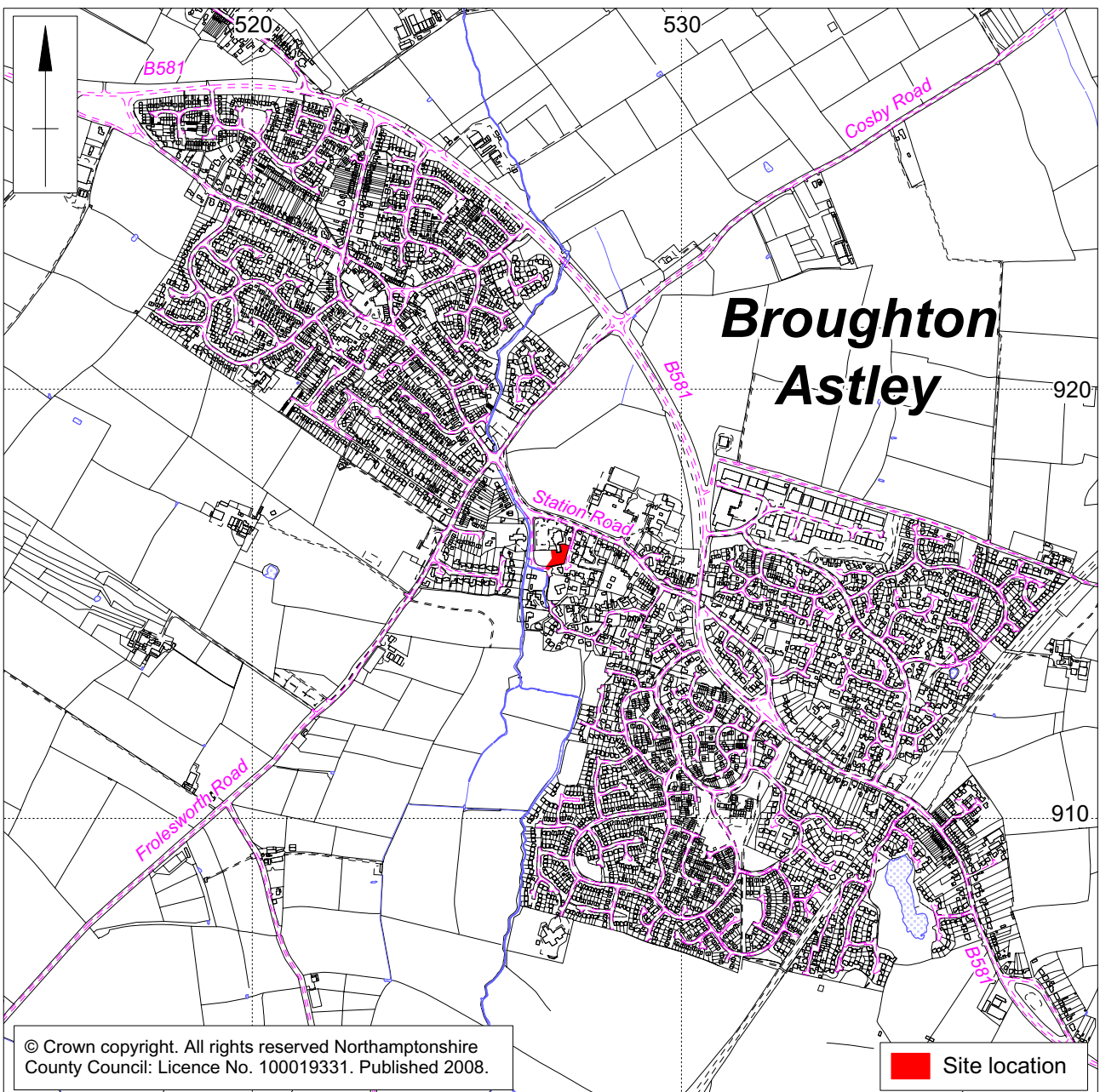
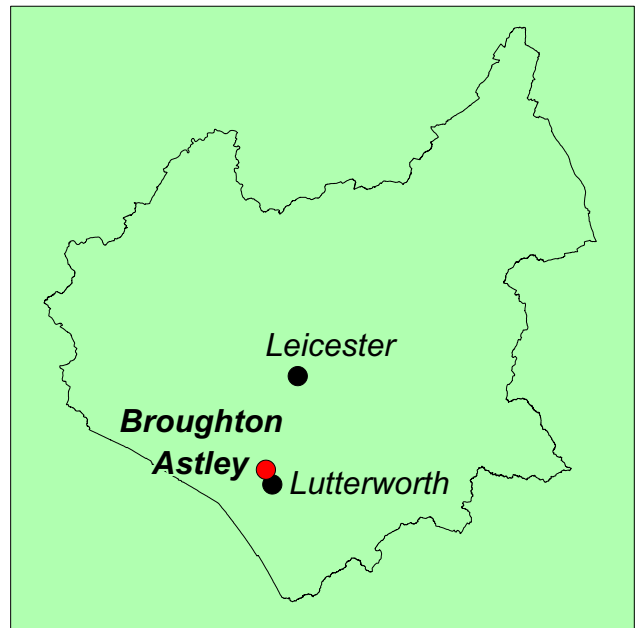
LCC HNET December 2007 *Generic Brief For Archaeological Evaluation By Trial Trenching*, Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team

NA 2008 *Specification for an archaeological evaluation at Park View Close, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

NCCNH 2003 *Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines*, Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Heritage

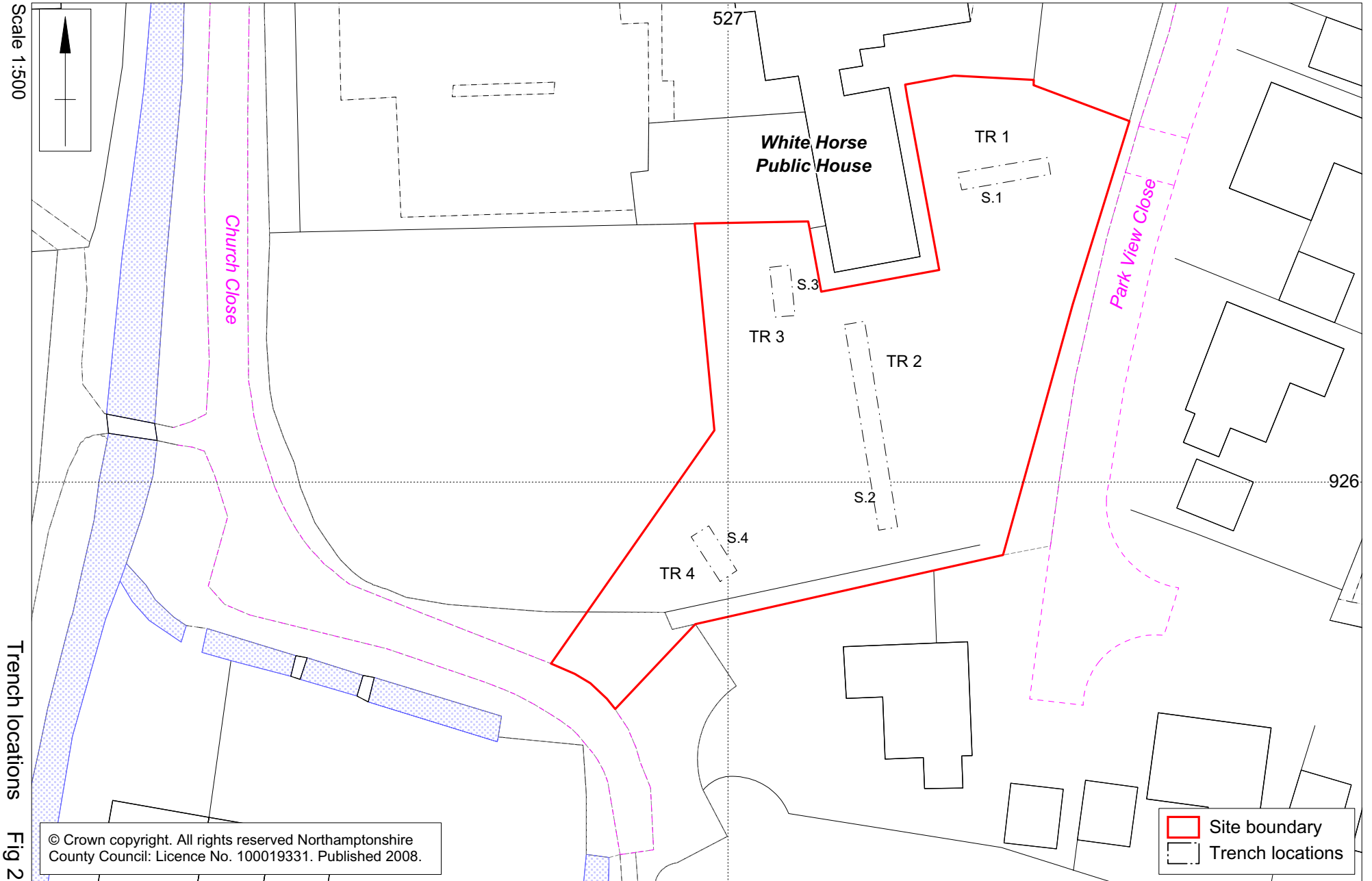
### **Websites:**

[www.broughton-astley.com](http://www.broughton-astley.com)

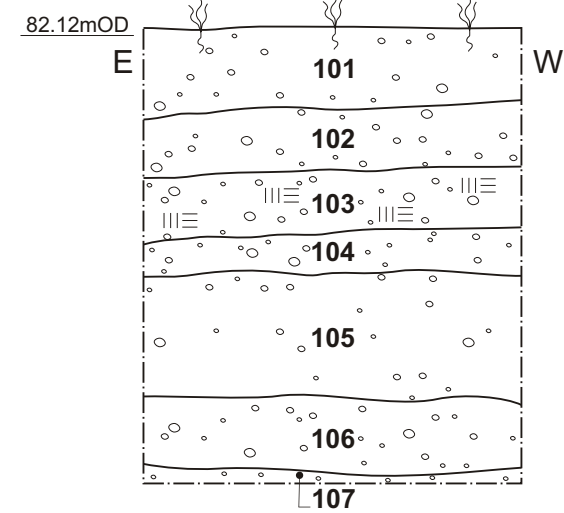


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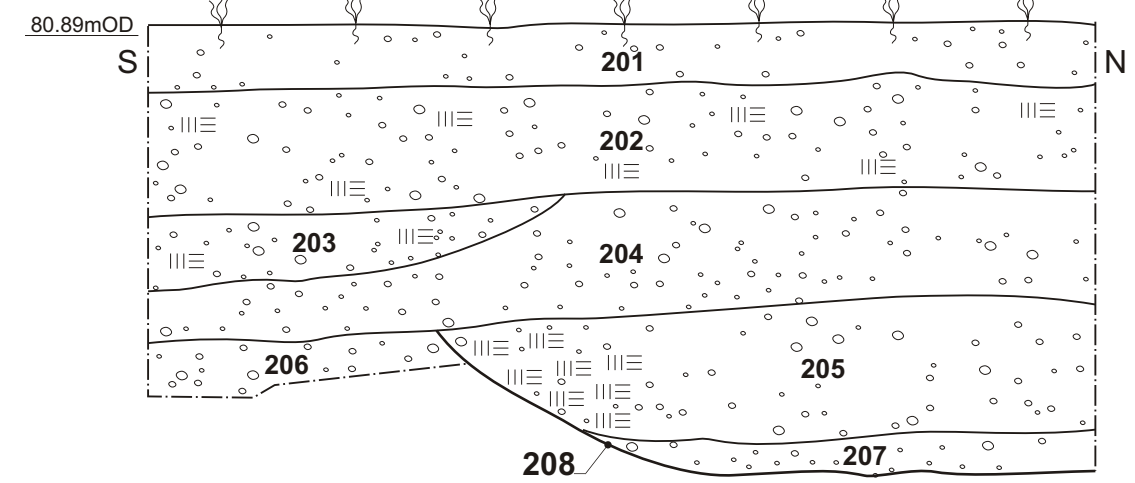
Site location Fig 1



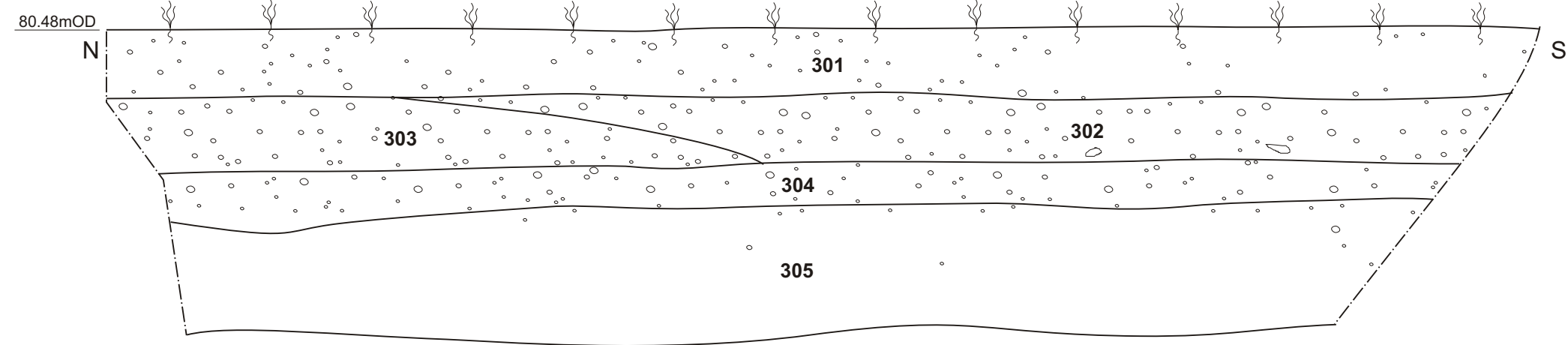
### Section 1 - Trench 1



### Section 2 - Trench 2



### Section 3 - Trench 3



### Section 4 - Trench 4

