



Northamptonshire  
County Council

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Fieldwalking Survey on land  
adjacent to Sketchley Brook, Hinckley

Leicestershire

February 2009



Paul Kajewski

March 2009

Report 09/23

## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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**OAS/S REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Archaeological Fieldwalking Survey on land adjacent to Sketchley Brook, Hinckley, Leicestershire.	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Under Construction Archaeology (UCA), to conduct a fieldwalking survey as part of an archaeological evaluation adjacent to Sketchley Brook, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire. The fieldwalking recovered a very low concentration of Roman and medieval pottery, an increased number of manure scattered early post-medieval finds with 95% of pottery and other finds from the 18th-20th centuries. The increase in finds during this period coincides with the construction of a canal and railway line that border the fields.	
Project type	Fieldwalking Survey	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Arable Land	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	None	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Lincolnshire	
Site address	Jericho Farm, Westfield Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	15ha approximately	
OS Easting & Northing	NGR SP 416 927	
Height OD	95-100 aOD	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Leicestershire County Council	
Project Design originator	Under Construction Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Paul Kajewski, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Tony Walsh, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	Goodman Developments Ltd	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	23 February 2009	
End date	24 February 2009	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	X.A3.2009	3 box: pottery, tile, brick, clay pipe, glass and flint
Paper	X.A3.2009	3 Fieldwalking Record Forms
Digital	X.A3.2009	PDF of report and illustrations.
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Title	Archaeological Fieldwalking survey at Sketchley Brook, Hinckley, Leicestershire	
Serial title & volume	09/23	
Author(s)	Paul Kajewski	
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Front cover: Area 1 facing north-west

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWALKING SURVEY  
AT SKETCHLEY BROOK, HINCKLEY, LEICESTERSHIRE  
FEBRUARY 2009**

*Abstract*

*Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Under Construction Archaeology (UCA), to conduct a fieldwalking survey as part of an archaeological evaluation adjacent to Sketchley Brook, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire. The fieldwalking recovered a very low concentration of Roman and medieval pottery, an increased number of manure scattered early post-medieval finds with 95% of pottery and other finds from the 18th-20th centuries. The increase in finds during this period coincides with the construction of a canal and railway line that border the fields.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Under Construction Archaeology, on behalf of Goodman Developments Ltd, to conduct a fieldwalking survey forming part of a larger plan of archaeological evaluations on land adjacent to Sketchley Brook, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire (NGR SP 416 928; Fig 1). The site has been identified as an area of significant archaeological potential by the Historic and Natural Environment Team (HNET), Leicestershire County Council, and a scheme of archaeological works have been outlined in a brief issued by HNET (2008). The survey investigated two fields, divided into three areas, totalling approximately 15ha composed of arable land to the north of Sketchley Brook (Fig 2).

The purpose of the fieldwalking survey was:

- To determine or confirm the general nature of any artefactual remains present.
- To determine or confirm the approximate spread of any artefactual remains.
- To determine the potential of the site to provide further archaeological evidence.

## **2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY**

The site is boarded by Sketchley Brook to the south and the Ashby de la Zouch Canal to the west. The surveyed area gently slopes down from north to south from 100m to 95m aOD (Fig 1).

The proposed development is divided into two fields immediately adjacent to the south of the main railway line through the town of Hinckley (Fig 1). The line divides Hinckley from its southern suburb village of Burbage and the satellite hamlet of Sketchley to the south-west. Sketchley Brook runs approximately 320m south of the railway, on a north-north-east to south-south-west orientation.

The larger portion of the site (Areas 1 and 2, Fig 2) is situated in arable fields north of a sewage works, at the eastern bank of the Ashby de la Zouch canal and west of demolished industrial works. There is a gentle slope downwards to the south-west. Jericho Farm is located within the arable field and forms the divider between Areas 1 and 2 (Fig 2). A sewage treatment works is situated immediately south of the Brook. Area 3 is a smaller area adjacent to the south-east of Area 1. The seeded, earthen ground surface in Areas 1, 2 and 3 had fair to good visibility for surface finds, parts of

the field had not been ploughed and were not surveyed (Fig 2).

The proposed development lies over a drift geology substrate of Glaciolacustrine deposits of clay and silt with alluvium close to the brook. A deposit of Till intrudes into the area on the eastern side of Jericho Farm (BGS Sheet 169). Areas 1 to 3 lie between 95m – 100m aOD.

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

A full archaeological background of the site can be found in the desk-based assessment and is summarised in part below. A geophysical survey has already been conducted and forms the basis for fieldwalking survey (UCA 2008; Butler 2009).

The desk-based assessment of the site has noted that no archaeological remains have been discovered within the proposed development area (UCA 2008). The Leicestershire Historic Environment Record indicates that finds of all periods have been discovered in the local area. A Neolithic polished stone axe head (MLE7236) was recovered to the south-west of the site and Middle Bronze Age spearhead (MLE6351) to the east. A settlement site of Middle Iron Age date was excavated by NA, south of Coventry Road 500m west of Area 1 (Chapman 2004).

The Watling Street Roman Road (MLE1388) is situated approximately 300m south of the site, ditches, postholes and a cobbled surface were found 200m south-west of Area 1 (MLE9164). Romano-British period features were also found at the Coventry Road Iron Age settlement (MLE8919). No finds of Anglo-Saxon date have been made in the area, although Hinckley is known to be pre-conquest in settlement origin (UCA 2008, 12). Locally, Sketchley (MLE2847) is a medieval settlement with a 13th-century chapel (MLE2835). Ridge and furrow cultivation remains are known from the area of Area 1 (UCA 2008, 12-13). The open fields are known to have been subject to enclosure in 1759.

The Ashby de la Zouch canal, bordering the west of Area 1, was constructed in the early 18th century. Hinckley's hosiery industry developed during the post-medieval period and by the mid-18th century had become a local centre. The 19th century saw the construction of the London and Western Railway through Hinckley in 1864 and development of Hinckley Sewage Works to the south of Sketchley Brook (UCA 2008, 14). Hinckley Wharf Patent Brick & Tile Works was developed immediately to the north of the railway line on the east side of the canal and Ordinance Survey maps show it with limekilns, kilns and a quarry. The brick works had closed by the 1920's (Fig 2).

Dye Works were erected adjacent to the west of the B4109 Rugby Road in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These expanded through the 1920s to form a large complex, now much demolished (UCA 2008, 15).

The farm buildings that are present on the site are post World War Two in date, and do not appear until the 1960 Ordinance Survey map.

### **4 FIELDWALKING METHODOLOGY AND SURVEY RESULTS**

The areas that were surveyed were walked in parallel transects spaced 10m apart, laid out square to a baseline set up along the most convenient edge of the field. Finds were collected from a zone extending for approximately 1m either side of each transect. Pro-forma record sheets were used to record the weather and ground

conditions for each area. The areas surveyed were walked systematically at a slow pace with individual finds collected and plotted in 30m stints.

All artefacts were collected, but excluded obvious recent materials. All worked flint was also retrieved. Samples of brick, tile and slag were collected, with concentration of these materials being noted.

All the finds were identified and each category subsequently had their distributions plotted in 30m stints within each transect and tied into the Ordnance Survey map, using MapInfo GIS system. The finds were then analysed to identify meaningful concentrations.

The survey was undertaken using standard procedures in accordance with The Institute of Field Archaeologist '*Standards and Guidance for Field Evaluation*' (IfA 1994, revised 2001) and the Northamptonshire County Council, Fieldwork Standards and Guidance (1995).

### Summary of the results

Finds have been plotted within broad categories of material and date (Figs 3, 4, and 5) and summarised in Table 1. Post-medieval pottery identification and classification is presented in Table 2.

Small quantities of prehistoric worked flint, Roman pottery/tile and medieval pottery were also recovered.

Overall, there was two concentrations of pottery:

- In the north-western half of Area 1, this probably relates to the waste produced by workers building the canal in the late 18th century and the railway in the mid-19th century.
- To the south of Jericho Farm in Area 1, this probably represents finds that were ploughed out of a former headland and a former boundary ditch (Fig 2).

Two concentrations of slag were observed in Area 1 which coincide with 'noise' on the geophysical survey (Figs 2 and 3).

Table 1: Fieldwalking finds

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3
Worked Flint (No.)	1	-	-
Roman Pottery (No.)	1	-	-
Roman Tile (No.)	1	-	-
Medieval pottery (No.)	4	-	-
16th-17th century pottery (No.)	24	3	2
17th-18th century pottery (No.)	16	3	1
18th-19th century pottery (No.)	139	4	9
19th-20th century pottery (No.)	112	21	5
Clay Pipe (No.)	33	2	1

#### 4.1 Worked flint by Paul Kajewski

One piece of worked flint was recovered from Area 1 it consists of a secondary flake which retains a light brown to grey cortex. The raw material is a grey-black, translucent vitreous flint (Fig 3).

#### 4.2 Roman finds by Tora Hylton and Iain Soden

One piece of badly abraded Nene Valley Colour Coat dating to the 3rd-4th century and piece of badly abraded Roman tile was recovered from Area 1. This material is likely to have been deposited as part of a manure scatter (Fig 3).

#### 4.3 Medieval finds by Tora Hylton and Iain Soden

Four pieces of medieval coarse ware were recovered from Area 1. All pieces were badly abraded and no firm date could be established. Once again this material is likely to have been deposited as part of manure scatter (Fig 3).

#### 4.4 Post-medieval finds by Tora Hylton and Iain Soden

##### **Pottery**

*Table 2: Post-medieval pottery by sherd count*

<b>Fabric Type</b>	<b>Area 1</b>	<b>Area 2</b>	<b>Area 3</b>
Cistercian ware (1450-1580)	6	1	1
Midland yellow (1550-1700)	5	1	
Manganese mottled ware (1680-1740)	19		
Eturia ware (1760-1770)	4		
Midland black (1580-1750)	9		4
Midland purple (15th-17th century)	18	2	1
Later blackware (17th-18th century)	59	4	4
Creamware (c. 1780)	8	1	
Nottingham stoneware (18th -19th century)	5		1
Iron glazed earthenware, incl'g c'ware pancheons (18th -19th century)	65	3	5
Tin glazed earthenware (17th -18th century)	3		
Miscellaneous stonewares (17th -20th century)	9	1	
Sprigged white china (c. 1780)		1	
Unglazed earthenware (17th -19th century)	1		
Feathered press moulded slipware (1680-1720)	3		1
Mochaware (19th century)	9	1	
Frechen stoneware (17th century)	2	1	
Stoneware (19th century)			
Blue shell edged pearl wares (1780-1820)	10	1	2
Sgraffito (18th century)	2		
Slipware (18th -19th century)	1		
White salt glazed stoneware (18th century)	1		
Glazed red earthenware (18th -19th century)		1	
Under-glazed transfer print earthenware (19th century)	29	13	
Dalton stoneware (1900)	1		
Glazed earthen ware (19th-20th century)	11		
Art pottery (20th century)	1		
Derbyshire stoneware (20th century)	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>19</b>



The post-medieval pottery was scattered across the whole survey area, numbering 339 sherds, which accounted for more than 95% of the pottery assemblage recovered (Fig 4s and 5, Table 2). The earlier pottery consisted of 16th-century vessels, which included Cistercian ware, slipwares, manganese mottled ware, Nottingham stone ware, tin and iron glazed wares, Midland black, yellow and purple wares. The majority of the pottery consisted of 18th to 19th-century glazed and unglazed kitchen or storage earthen wares.

There were a moderate number of table wares, which included 18th-19th century utilitarian white wares and underglazed transfer print earthenwares, the occasional 18th-century blue shell-edged pearl ware.

The early post-medieval pottery distribution over the two fields probably represented no more than manure scatter, with a low to moderate spread across the fields. The north-western corner of Area 1 had the greatest concentration of later post-medieval pottery is probably due to their close proximity to the canal, railway and industry, immediately north of the railway line, which, during their construction and use, allowed for a greater deposition and therefore a higher amount of pottery waste.

### ***Tile and brick***

The majority of the ceramic building material observed was post-medieval roof tile and few fragments of post-medieval brick. Only a representative sample of the tile and brick were collected. Most of the post-medieval tile derived from Area 1 with a low distribution from Areas 2 and 3.

The origin of the tile and brick was probably from the sites of a demolished field barn (Fig 3). The location of the barn was in the corner of former field boundaries, with several courses of brickwork still visible. The locations of the structure is shown on the present Ordnance Survey map, and they were shown as standing structures on the 1881 First Edition Ordnance Survey (UCA 2008).

Some of the tile and brick may also have found its way onto the fields as hardcore for a track, which leads into Jericho Farm in the north-east of the survey area.

### ***Clay Pipe***

Thirty-six clay pipe fragments were recovered from Areas 1, 2 and 3 which included a 17th-18th century bowl, a heel with a makers mark 'R.K' from the early 18th century and a 19th century heel. These pieces probably relate to the general post-medieval manure scatter or random loss (Fig 3).

### ***Glass***

Twenty-one pieces of glass were recovered from the three areas. Three pieces had sufficient features to date, two to the 19th century and the other was modern.

## **4.5 The ironworking debris by Andy Chapman**

The recovered slag was examined to identify its broad characteristics. The material is consistent in comprising irregular small lumps, from 20-90mm in diameter, of light highly-vesicular undiagnostic slag, typically light grey to purple in colour. A single piece has orange-brown fired clay adhering to it, indicating that it had come from a

furnace/hearth lining, and a single piece has a small black laminated inclusion, probably coal, while there are no charcoal impressions on any pieces.

The material is evidently a product of ironworking, and the broad scatter of material would suggest that it is most probably debris from iron smelting. The absence of charcoal impressions and a single possible occurrence of coal suggest that the material is of post-medieval date (Fig 3).

## **5 ASSESSMENT**

The fieldwalking survey showed that little or no activity occurred in the early history of the site, with only one worked flint found.

Pottery from the Roman period was represented by one pottery sherd and a possible floor tile, from in Area 1, dating between the 3rd to 4th centuries. All pieces are badly abraded and indicative of manure scatter and not on-site activity.

Medieval to 16th century pottery is present but in relatively small quantities. By the medieval period all the areas of survey were under agricultural use, with variable amounts of manure scattered pottery, depending on the accessibility of the fields. The geophysical survey shows medieval ridge and furrow field cultivation present on the survey area. Smaller fields were created from the open field system after the 1759 enclosure act. These boundaries are shown on the 1881 Ordnance Map and are highlighted by the geophysical survey (UCA 2008) (Fig 2). The ridge and furrow and later enclosure boundaries are now ploughed out, thus spreading any pottery that they contained over the site.

Two concentrations of slag, recovered from Area 1, may show areas of industrial activity. Due to the quantities of slag on the site, less than 5% was collected. The geophysical survey highlighted areas of 'noise' in these areas (Fig 2). The interpretation of this collection of material is unclear. It may indicate industrial activity, potentially relating to the construction of the canal on the western boundary or the railway line on the northern border of the site or dumps of slag material on the field, but it is not necessarily a guide to the presence of recognisable subsurface features. The northernmost spread lies close to a modern services trench identified during the geophysical survey. Due to its location close to the service trench the northernmost spread may not be able to be further investigated. Slag was also used on the railway lines as ballast, which could explain the background spread of slag across the site (Claisse and Calla 2006).

The bulk of the pottery, brick and tile comes from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The type and amount of pottery is indicative of manure scatter and or waste produced by the workers left behind during the construction of the canal in the late 18th century and the railway line during the mid 19th-century.

The possible presence of archaeological features in the west of Area 1 (Fig 2) identified by the geophysical survey (Butler 2009) was not confirmed by this survey.

As a whole the fieldwalking has not clearly identified any sites of archaeological significance, and has not greatly aided the objective of clarifying some of the data obtained in earlier investigations. However, it is always possible that sites are present without telltale signatures of material in the ploughsoil.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of the fieldwalking survey alone, there is no firm indication of archaeological remains of significance in any of the sites examined.

In conjunction with other lines of evidence, however, such as nearby previously identified sites and finds, or features identified through geophysical survey, trial trenching should be considered to help confirm or deny the presence of significant remains.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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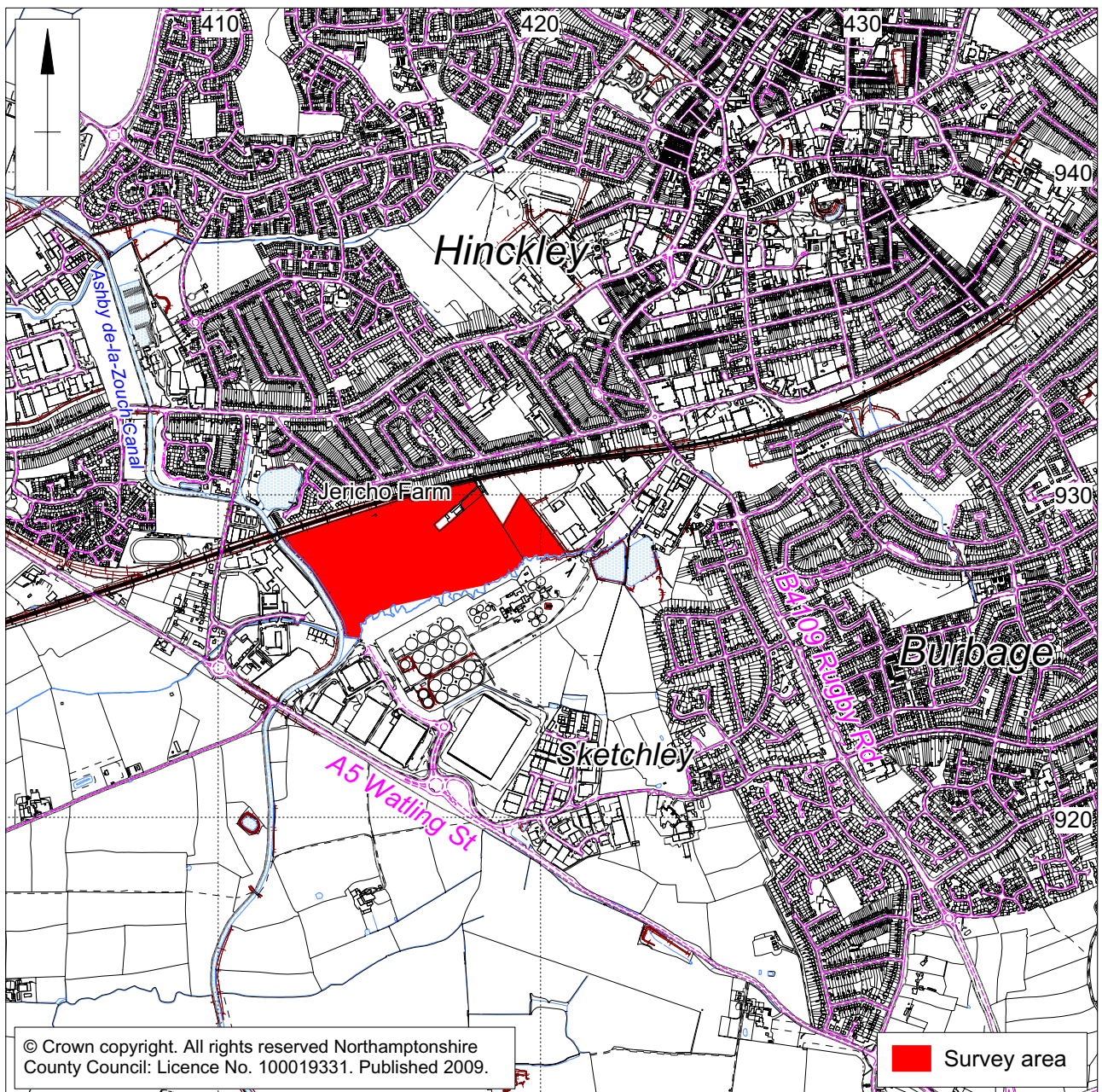
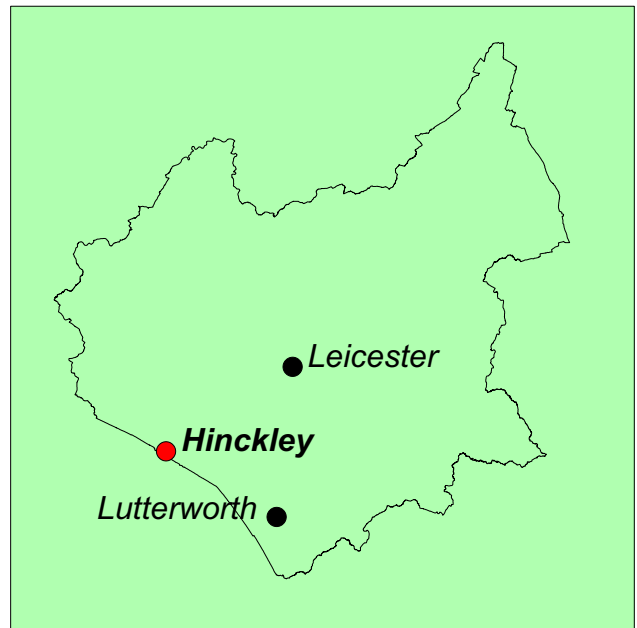
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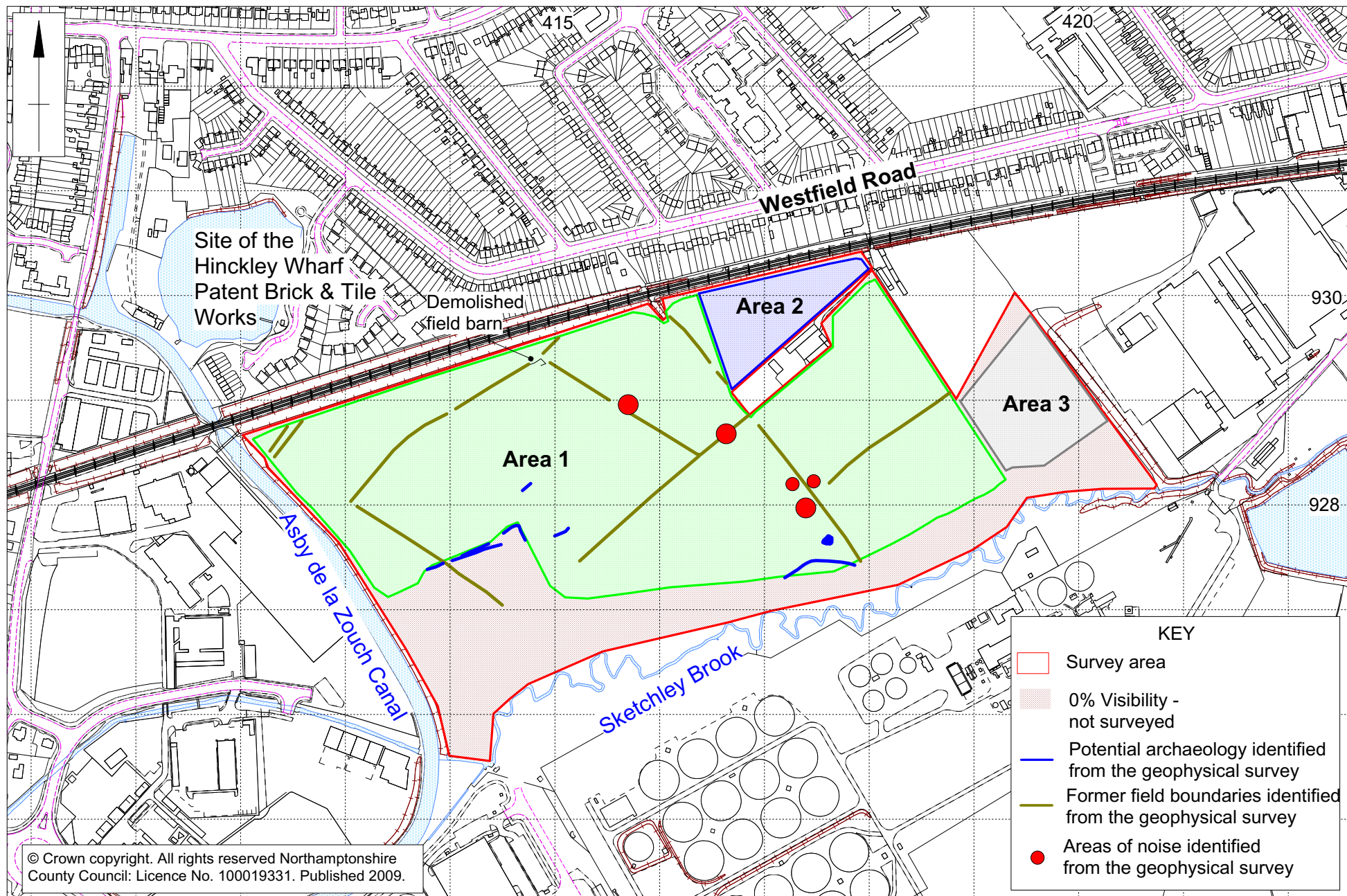
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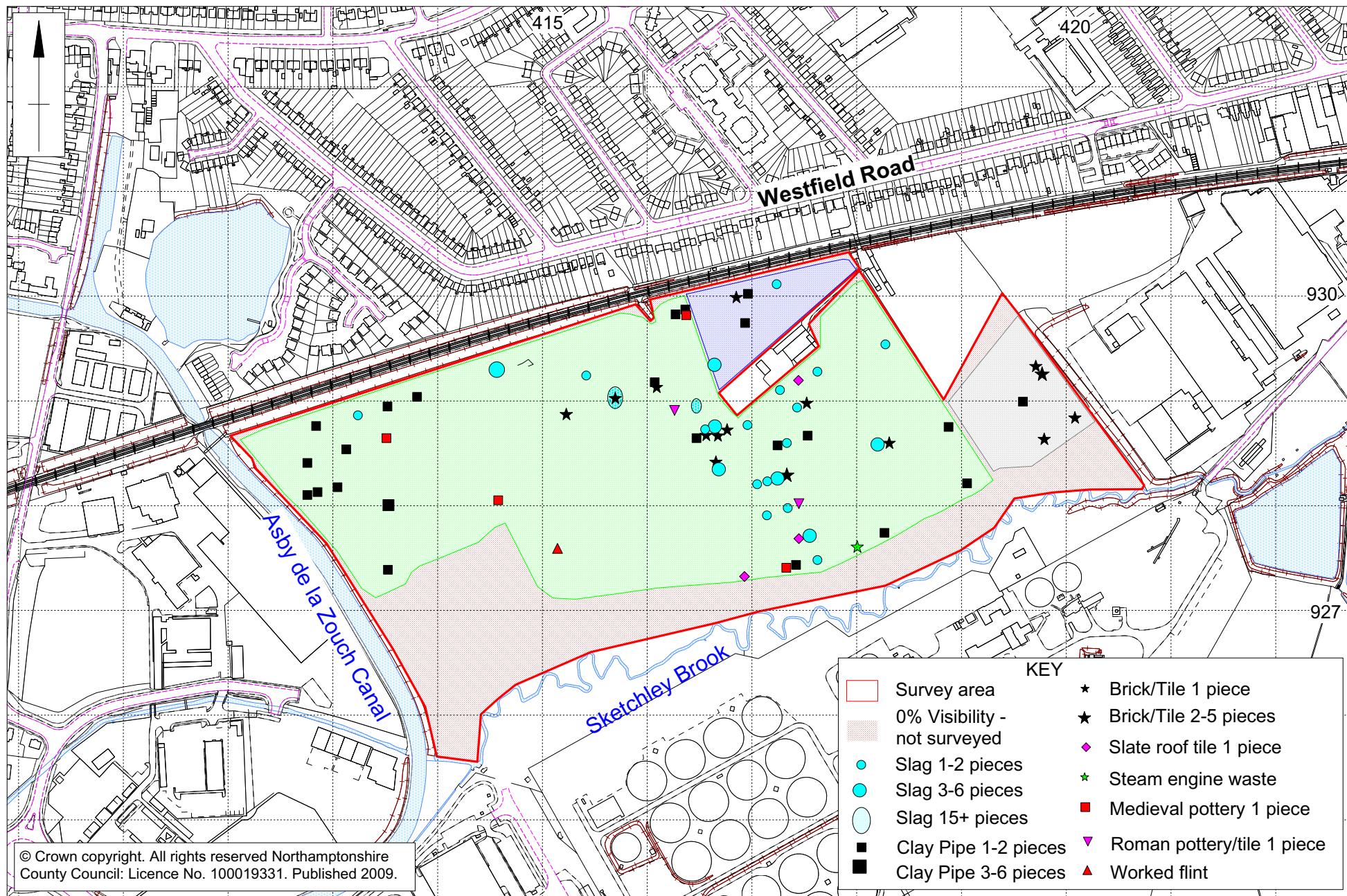
Site location Fig 1





Scale 1:5000 @ A4

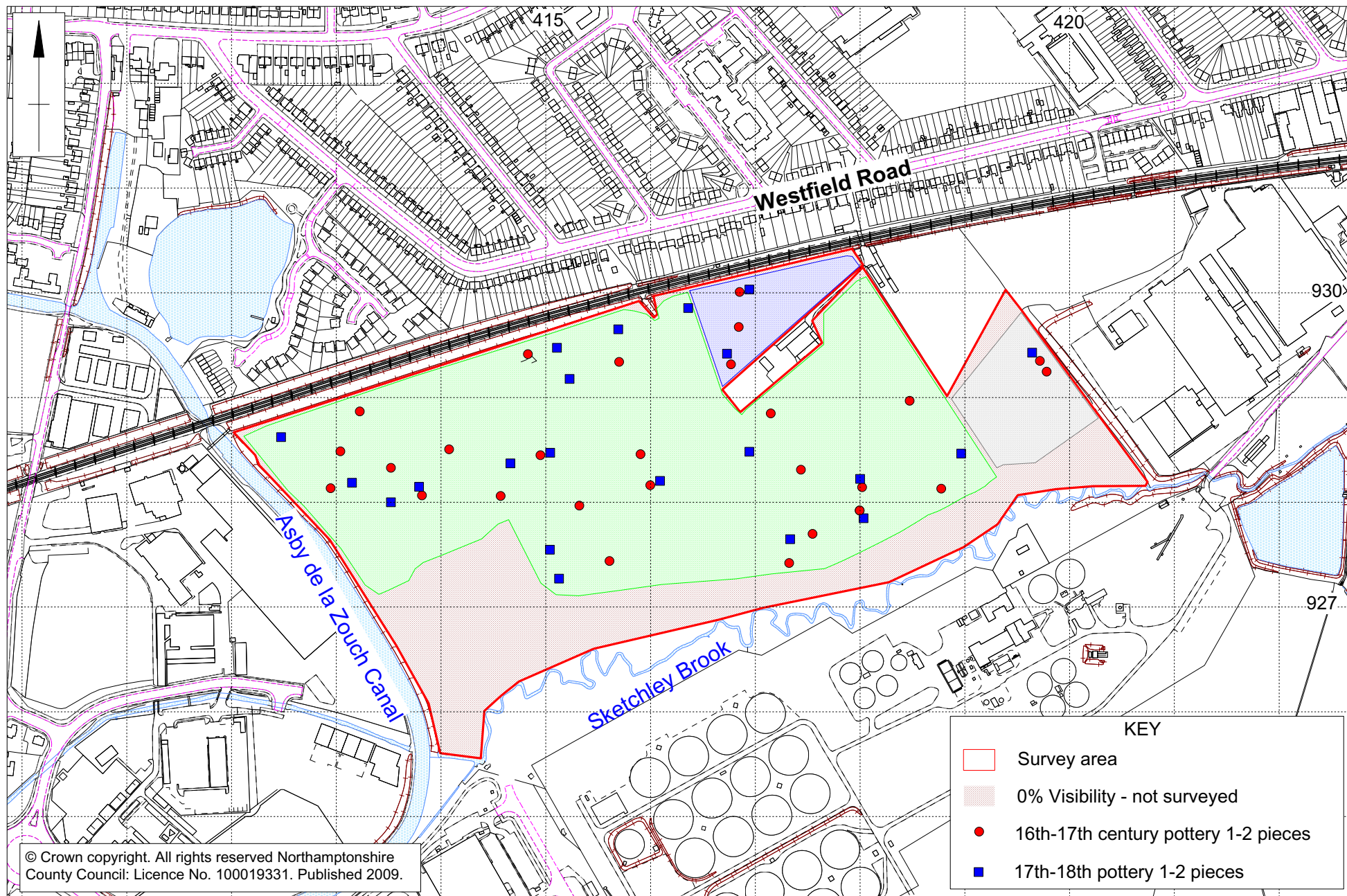
Survey area Fig 2



Scale 1:5000 @ A4

Distribution of slag, clay pipe, Brick and tile, Medieval pottery, Roman pottery and tile and worked flint Fig 3

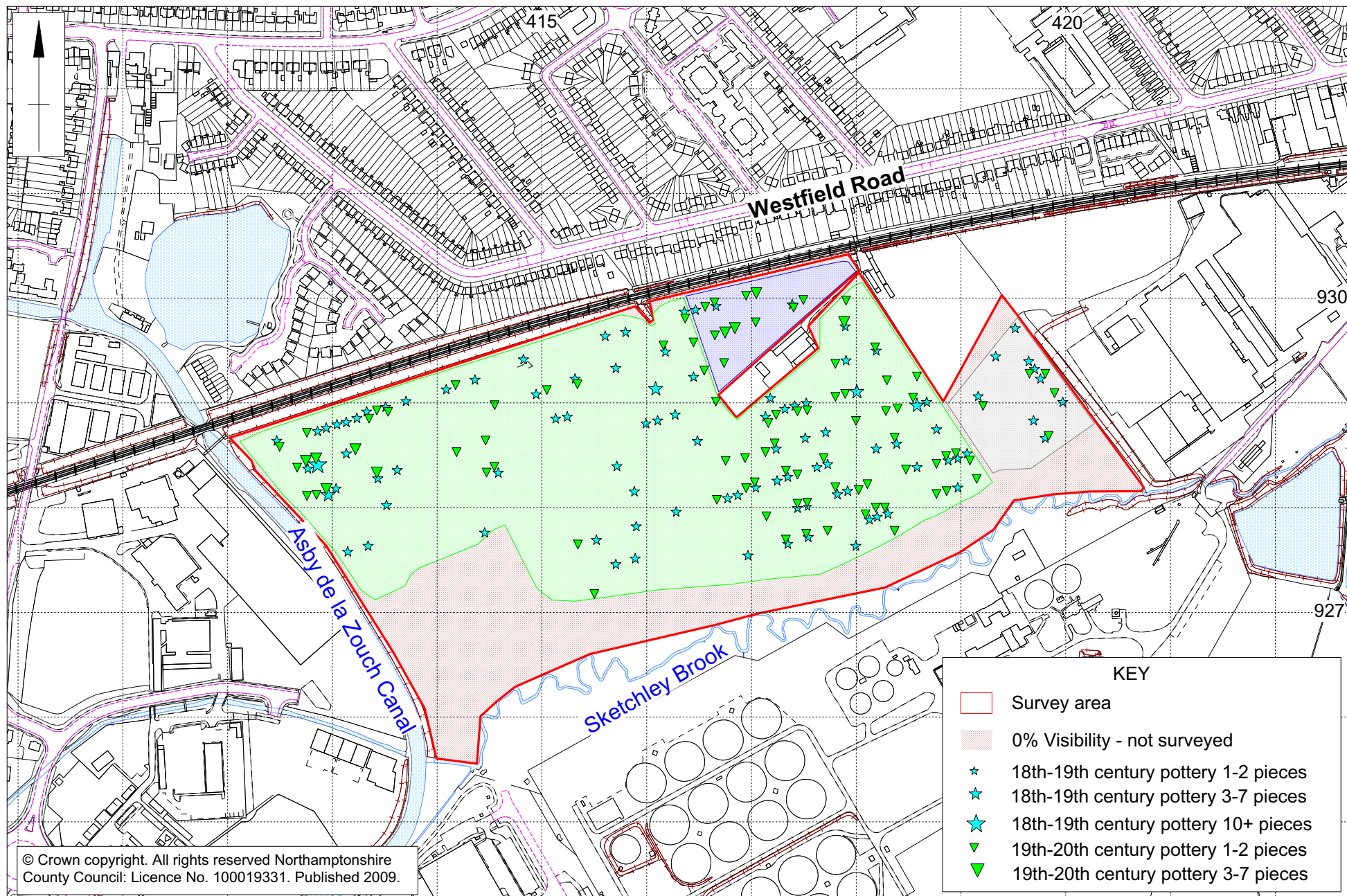




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Distribution of 16th-17th and 17th-18th century pottery Fig 4





Scale 1:5000 @ A4

Distribution of 18th-19th and 19th-20th century pottery Fig 5