



Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological trial trench evaluation at
The Old Forge, North Marston
Buckinghamshire
September 2009

Site code: AYBCM: 2009.156
NGR SP 7759 2268



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October 2009

Report 09/129

Northamptonshire Archaeology

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological trial trench evaluation at The Old Forge, North Marston, Buckinghamshire, September 2009	
Short description (250 words maximum)	In September 2009, an archaeological trial excavation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of The Providence Partnership on land at The Old Forge, North Marston, Buckinghamshire. Two trenches were excavated revealing a wall foundation for a post-medieval building thought to have occupied the site since the mid-19th century until recently, c1966-1985.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Evaluation	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	None	
Current land use	Disused building	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Post-medieval building	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Buckinghamshire	
Site address (including postcode)	The Old Forge, High Street, North Marston, Buckinghamshire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	375 sq m	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	SP 7759 2268	
Height OD	c117.00m above Ordnance Datum	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Ruth Beckley, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service	
Project Design originator	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Nathan Flavell, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	The Providence Partnership	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	1st September 2009	
End date	2nd September 2009	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	AYBCM: 2009.156	Pottery and brick
Paper	AYBCM: 2009.156	Evaluation <i>pro forma</i> sheets, context sheets, colour slides, black and white contact prints, digital photographs, plans and section drawings
Digital	AYBCM: 2009.156	Report text and figures
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	An archaeological trial trench evaluation at The Old Forge, North Marston, Buckinghamshire, September 2009	
Serial title & volume	09/129	
Author(s)	Nathan Flavell	
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Back cover: Site prior to excavation facing west

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION AT THE OLD FORGE, NORTH MARSTON BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SEPTEMBER 2009

Abstract

In September 2009 an archaeological trial trench excavation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of The Providence Partnership on land at The Old Forge, North Marston, Buckinghamshire. Two trenches were excavated revealing a wall foundation for a post-medieval building thought to have occupied the site since the mid-19th century until recently, c1966-1985.

1 INTRODUCTION

Archaeological evaluation comprising trial trenching was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology in September 2009 at The Old Forge, North Marston, Buckinghamshire (Fig 1; NGR SP 7759 2268).

The work was undertaken in order to inform a planning application by The Providence Partnership for a terrace of three two-storey dwellings with gardens and parking to the rear which may impact upon archaeological remains within the medieval core of the village. The work followed a specification produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology to meet the requirements of a generic brief issued by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (Brown 2009; BCC 2008).

The archaeological program followed the management guidelines of English Heritage as set out in the *MAP2* procedural document (EH 1991). The works were conducted in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008) and the *Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists* (IfA 1985, revised 2008).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Historical background

The name Marston derives from the old english *mersc* + *tun* and means 'Marsh-farm'. The affix North describes its position in relation to Fleet Marston (met.open.ac.uk/genuki/big/eng/BKM/NorthMarston/).

North Marston is described in the *History of the County of Buckingham* (Page 1927):

The village in the centre of the parish is nearly 1 mile in length. A fire is said to have destroyed many houses in 'the High Street' in 1700. There remain a number of old cottages and small houses, mostly of half-timber with brick fillings and thatched or tiled roofs. A few retain their wattle and daub fillings. These buildings date from the 16th century and later, and there is a good deal of brickwork of the 17th century onwards. Some of the red brick chimney stacks are of 16th-century date. The church stands conspicuously at the north-east end of the village, on rising ground, with the glebe farm and vicarage to the south-east and the school to the north-west. Manor Farm lies further to the west of the church. It is a good example of the better class of house, dating from the 16th century, with a 17th-century wing and later additions. The Wesleyans and the Primitive Methodists have each a chapel in the village. Near the latter, to the southeast, is the Shorne Spring, a chalybeate spring of very pure cold water which supplies the

town well. It is said to have been blessed by the venerated rector of the parish, Sir John, St. John, or Master John Shorne, who died at North Marston in 1314, and continued to be one of the most popular local saints in England until the Reformation. Two or three miles west of the village there are two homestead moats (VCH 1927).

2.2 Archaeological background

Prior to excavation, the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted and produced the following results for the relevant area (Table 1).

Table 1: Historic Environment Record data

HER no	OS grid reference	Description
0071800000	SP 77400 22700	Half of a Saxon loomweight
0071800000	SP 77400 22700	Piece of antler with point intact, showing knife cuts, found with Saxon loomweight
0633900000	SP 775 225	Open field, enclosed 1778, 11th-18th century
0209800000	SP 77700 22700	Parish Church, 13th-15th century, restored 1920-1
0132400000	SP 77671 22525	John Schorne's well, medieval, restored 1970
0051200000	SP 7701 2246	Manor house, medieval, demolished
0128600000	SP 7795 2248	'The Gentleman's fishpond', infilled medieval moat
0583301000	SP 77366 22800	Remains of medieval building found under 17th-century building renovation
1096700000	SP 77623 22625	16th-century timber-framed house with later alterations
1096800000	SP 77641 22613	16th-17th-century timber-framed house with modern alterations
1097100000	SP 77435 22826	Late 16th-17th-century timber-framed house
1097000000	SP 77417 22866	17th-century timber-framed house with later extensions and alterations
0583300000	SP 77366 22800	17th-century timber-framed house
1097400000	SP 77347 22808	17th-century timber-framed house with extensions, formerly an inn
1097500000	SP 77401 22772	17th-century timber-framed house with later alterations
1097900000	SP 77258 22835	Row of three 17th-century timber-framed cottages, originally one house
1098000000	SP 77126 22869	17th-century timber-framed house
1098200000	SP 77592 22711	17th-century timber-framed house
1097501000	SP 77383 22781	17th-18th-century timber-framed outbuilding
1096600000	SP 77671 22641	18th-century house
1097200000	SP 77539 22746	Late 18th-century inn
1097800000	SP 77649 22348	18th-century house
1096900000	SP 77723 22623	Late 18th-century to early 19th-century house
0803800000	SP 77485 22700	Remains of 18th-century barn recorded during a watching brief
0805200000	SP 77586 22635	Post-medieval ditches found during evaluation
0805400000	SP 77779 22633	Posthole, 18th-19th century
0128601000	SP 77960 22480	Traditional site of the vicarage, 19th century
1097300000	SP 77541 22731	Pair of 19th-century cottages
0290300000	SP 77550 22800	19th-century smock mill base
0209800000	SP 77684 22705	St. Mary's churchyard
EBC16693	SP 77684 22705	Watching brief at St. Mary's Church - burial remains
EBC16432	SP 77591 22635	Trial excavations at 1 Portway - post-medieval remains
EBC16081	SP 77485 22697	Watching brief at 26 High Street - 18th-20th century remains
EBC16433	SP 77783 22613	Trial excavations on land adjacent to The Vicarage - negative

A visit was made to consult the HER directly on the 15th October 2009 to read the reports of previous evaluations conducted in the village, and to examine the relevant aerial photographic and map evidence.

Of particular interest was the evaluation study at 26 High Street which included a compilation of map evidence with the 1832 Tithe map (Abrams 2002, fig 3). This Tithe map does not depict the greens along the High Street, but more importantly demonstrated that the plot of land occupied by the Old Forge was undeveloped prior to 1832. The first depiction of a building on the site is on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1880 and remains unchanged on subsequent editions in 1883, 1900 and 1952 (www.old-maps.co.uk). These later editions show the addition of buildings around edges of the building plot forming a small yard area, accessible from the south-west.

Aerial photographs taken on the 13th June 1947 and 21st March 1966 depict the site with these buildings (CPE/UK/2159). A number of oblique photographs show the same buildings in greater detail. The front of the plot along High Street was occupied by a small brick building with three garage doors facing the street. Buildings surrounding the yard space were makeshift sheds with corrugated iron roofing, and the building at the southern side of the site was a corrugated iron nissen hut. The present building, which replaced these structures, is visible on an aerial photograph taken on the 12th March 1985.

2.3 Topography and geology

The site is situated at the south-east junction of High Street and School Hill, North Marston and to the west of the church of St. Mary within the core of the medieval settlement. The village lies between two tributaries of Claydon Brook upon the southern slopes of the valley, close to the watershed. There is a sharp upward slope on the hillsides to the south-east and south-west towards the neighbouring villages of Oving and Quainton. The land drops more gradually towards Granborough to the north. Immediately to the south-east, across High Street, and bordering with Church Street is the village pond.

The geology of the valley sides comprises Kimmeridge Clay derived from the Upper Jurassic period (BGS 2001). Soils are of the Denchworth association, medium loamy or medium silty drift over clayey material passing to clay or soft mudstone (LAT 1983).

3 EXCAVATION STRATEGY

3.1 Objectives

The general objectives of the overall evaluation were set out in the Specification as follows (Brown 2009):

- The aim of the trial trench evaluation is to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial for important archaeological remains within the application area.
- Excavation will pay particular attention to deposits and features relating to the medieval and post-medieval development at the core of the village. The building plot in which the application area is situated has an unusual character within the broader plan of the village and further information regarding its development and use is particularly desirable.

3.2 Methodology

Two trenches, 4m long and 3m wide, were excavated by a 360° mini-digger using a toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. The trenches were positioned in accordance with the trench location plan approved by the Buckinghamshire Planning Archaeologist and have been related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid (Fig 2).

The tarmac surface, hardcore layers and non-structural post-medieval and later deposits were removed to reveal the surface of the significant archaeological level. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification of features and layers.

All deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were given a unique context reference number and were fully recorded following standard Northamptonshire Archaeology procedures (NA 2003). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships, interpretation and a checklist of associated finds. The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:20 and the sections of each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and related to Ordnance Datum. Archaeological artefacts were recovered from the secure context deposits. A full photographic record comprising both 35mm black and white negatives and colour transparencies was maintained, supplemented with digital images.

The field data was compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing. A fully integrated archive will be deposited with the Buckinghamshire County Museum at the conclusion of the project (Accession no: AYBCM 2009.156).

4 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

4.1 Introduction

The trenches were aligned approximately north-west to south-east, positioned to provide as much coverage in the small area available, and to avoid an electric cable running across the site.

Overlying the natural substrate were various post-medieval and modern levelling layers and deposits. The only archaeological feature encountered was a foundation wall for a post-medieval building.

4.2 Trench 1

The natural substrate comprising mottled grey and yellow clay (111) was encountered 1.26m below ground level. This was overlain by two layers of mottled grey-brown silty-clay, (110) and (109), measuring 0.17m and 0.24m thick respectively (Fig 3, Section 3). These were sealed by a levelling layer of mottled dark-grey sandy-clay (108) that was 0.27m thick with very frequent charcoal flecking and produced four sherds of underglaze transfer printed earthenware dating from the second half of the 19th century, a fragment of roof tile and a fragment of brick.

Levelling layer (108) was truncated by a vertical cut [107] for a brick wall (106). The wall formed the corner of a building that was orientated north-west to south-east. A smaller section of wall abutted the south-east side (Fig 5). The bricks were reddish-orange, measuring 230mm by 115mm by 75mm. There were three visible courses standing 0.25m high and founded upon a coarse stone base at 0.57m below ground level. The bricks were laid in an English Cross bond with a creamy-yellow sandy mortar. Within the area of the brick wall was a hard concrete surface (105) (Fig 4).

Partially overlying the demolished brick wall was a levelling layer of black sooty silty clay (104), 0.16m thick, which was only evident from 2.3m along the south-west facing section and across the width of the trench. Overlying this was a demolition layer, 0.30-0.52m thick, consisting of grey silty-clay (103) with fragmented brick, sandstone and modern rubbish including plastic.

The whole trench was overlain by an orange-yellow sand layer (102), 0.06-0.10m thick, which was in turn overlain by tarmac (101), 0.02-0.04m thick.

4.3 Trench 2

The natural substrate (210) was found at 1.94m below ground level, sloping down in a sondage to the south-east to 2.56m below ground level. This was overlain by a mottled grey-yellow silty-clay layer (209), similar to (110), that was 0.30m thick (Fig 3, Section 1 and Figs 6-7). A dark grey silty-clay (207) that was 0.15m thick overlay this that produced a single fragment of unglazed post-medieval roofing tile. This layer was in turn overlain by mid-grey silty-clay (208), which was 0.14m thick, with frequent charcoal flecks and similar to (108). A dump of redeposited natural mottled blue-grey clay (206) lay upon this, 0.66m thick, containing two brick fragments and three fragments of 19th-century iron-glazed earthenware pancheon. This layer was only evident in the south-east end of the trench.

Levelling layer (205), a sooty silty-clay that was similar to (104), lay across the trench and was 0.15m thick. A rough concrete surface (204) that was 0.10m thick overlay this and was covered by a sand and rubble layer (203) that was 0.08-0.18m thick into which modern service lines and drains had been cut up to 0.65m deep. The top of the trench was overlain by orange-yellow sand (202), 0.06-0.10m thick, and tarmac (201) that was 0.04m thick.

5 THE FINDS

5.1 The post-medieval pottery by Iain Soden

Seven sherds of late post-medieval and modern pottery were recovered from two contexts. There are four tiny sherds from underglaze transfer-printed earthenware table wares (BCAS type P45, context 108) and three sherds from an iron-glazed earthenware pancheon (BCAS type P03, context 206). None are significant and all are indicative of a date in the second half of the 19th Century.

5.2 The brick by Pat Chapman

A sample brick taken from wall (106) revealed that the fabric was originally pale red and cream in colour with a pink surface. One header and one surface had become grey and partially vitrified after being exposed to high temperatures. Both headers and stretchers are iron stained, including half of one stretcher and header where they had only been partly exposed, indicated by a sharply-defined line along the middle. Four of the surfaces had been covered in white mortar to some extent, overlying the iron staining, indicating that the brick had been reused from an earlier dismantled structure. The lack of a frog could indicate a date from the 17th century or earlier, however, bricks manufactured for a specific purpose or structure would not necessarily be frogged.

An early date for the brick is now considered extremely unlikely in the light of aerial photographic and map evidence held in the HER and it would seem that the brick is a

poor quality, possibly reclaimed, example of mid-19th century origin used in the construction of an ancillary structure.

6 DISCUSSION

The current building that occupies the site was built between 1966 and 1985. The Tithe map of 1832 clearly showed that there was no encroachment onto the village greens prior to that date. The Ordnance Survey maps from 1880, 1883, 1900 and 1952 show a different building on the site on an alignment that was comparable to the foundations uncovered in Trench 1, together with the gradual addition of other structures around the edges of the plot to form a small yard with access to the south-west. This evidence was corroborated by aerial photographic evidence from 1947, 1966 and 1985, indicating that the yard was surrounded by corrugated iron sheds with a nissen hut on the south side and a brick building on the west side.

The brick structure encountered in Trench 1 was built in the mid-19th century, its use in the early part of the 20th century was as a line of garages. There were no occupation layers associated with domestic activity and it seems likely that the building would have been substantially altered during its use. It is likely that the name of the site, Old Forge, refers to light manufacturing activities that were probably undertaken in the corrugated iron buildings in the period since the Second World War.

There was an absence of medieval activity on the site. The map evidence shows its location centrally within the village plan. Close proximity to the pond and the character of the small greens stretching to the north-west along the High Street suggest that this property is post-medieval infill of medieval open space.

The slope of the natural clay in the south-east end of Trench 2, combined with sloping silty clay layers, indicate there was a drop off in the land. It is possible that this was part of the pond that still exists directly to the south-east, and may have been much larger in medieval times. Remnant indications of homogeneous garden soils had largely been eradicated by the post-medieval activity and the site appeared to have been levelled out using clay to fill the depression.

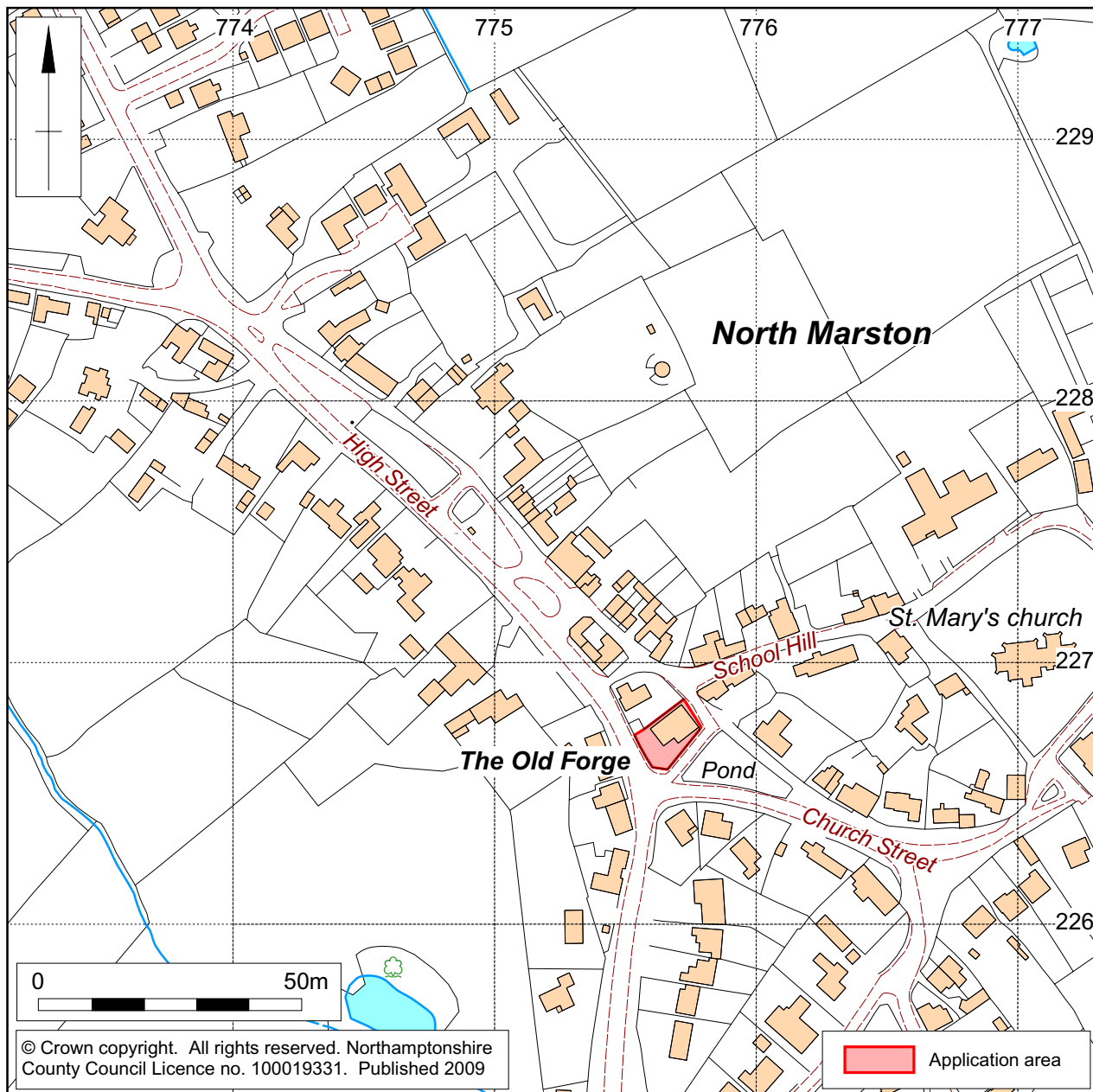
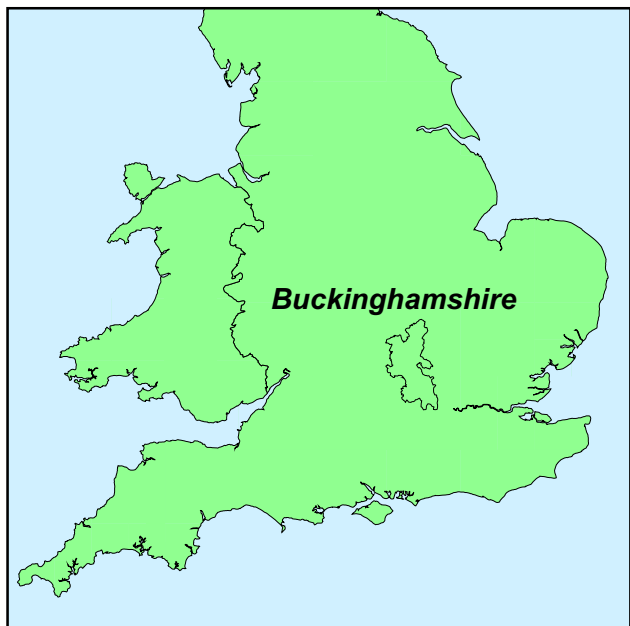
Given the high degree of modern disturbance, levelling, the absence of any deposits or finds that predate the mid-19th century and its position on a former green, the archaeological potential of this site would appear minimal at best.

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APPENDIX - Context index*Table 2: Context index*

Context Number	Type	Brief description	Date
101	Surface	Tarmac: 0.02-0.04m thick	Modern
102	Layer	Sand: 0.06-0.10m thick	Modern
103	Layer	Rubble: 0.3-0.52m thick	Modern
104	Layer	Sooty sand-clay: 0.16m thick	Modern
105	Surface	Concrete	Modern
106	Wall	Brick	Post-medieval
107	Cut	Wall foundation	Post-medieval
108	Layer	Mottled dark grey sandy-clay: 0.27m thick	Post-medieval
109	Layer	Dark grey-brown silty-clay: 0.24m thick	Post-medieval
110	Layer	Mottled grey-orange silty-clay: 0.17m thick	Post-medieval
111	Layer	Natural	-
201	Surface	Tarmac: 0.04m thick	Modern
202	Layer	Sand: 0.06-0.10m thick	Modern
203	Layer	Hardcore: 0.08-0.18m thick	Modern
204	Surface	Rough concrete: 0.1m thick	Modern
205	Layer	Sooty sand-clay: 0.15m thick	Modern
206	Layer	Mottled blue-grey clay: 0.66m thick	Post-medieval
207	Layer	Dark grey clay: 0.14m thick	Post-medieval
208	Layer	Mid-grey silty-clay: 0.14m	Post-medieval
209	Layer	Mottled grey-yellow: 0.3m thick	Post-medieval
210	Layer	Natural	-



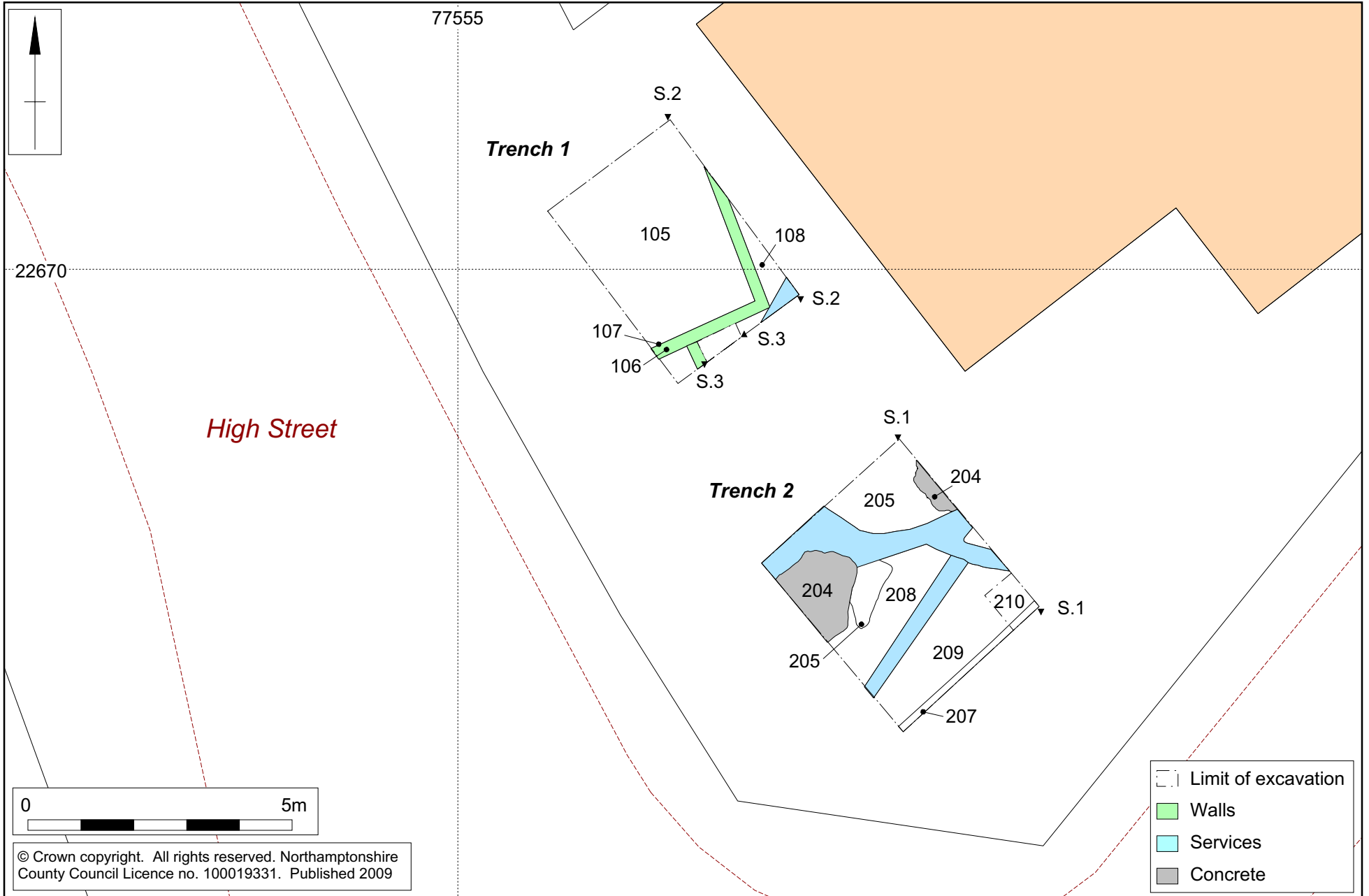
Scale 1:2500

Site location Fig 1

Scale 1:100

Trench Locations and features

Fig 2



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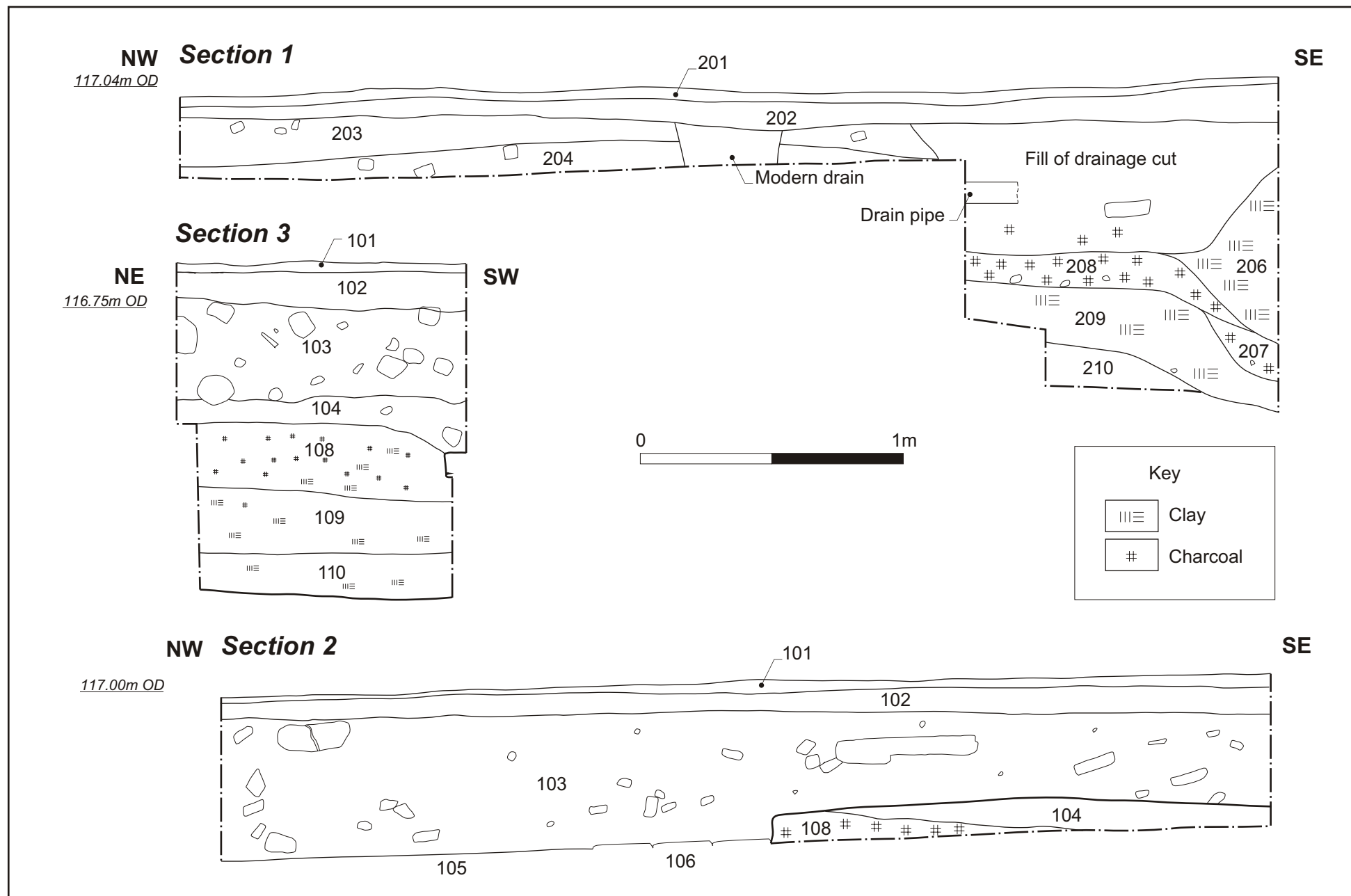




Fig 4 Trench 1, general view, facing south-east



Fig 5 Trench 1, north-west facing section showing wall foundation



Fig 6 Trench 2, general view, facing south-east



Fig 8 Trench 2, south-west facing section



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