

**LAND ADJACENT TO NO.9, SULEHAY ROAD,
YARWELL, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

SCHEME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION

NGR:	TL 06651 97858
Planning Ref.:	14/00916/FUL
PCAS job no.	1309
Site code:	SURM 14
Archive acc. code:	ENN 107681

Prepared for

Wythe Holland Ltd.

by

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November 2014



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Summary

A programme of archaeological mitigation was undertaken on land adjacent to no.9, Sulehay Road, Yarwell, Northamptonshire.

The development site is situated on the western edge of the village of Yarwell. A Roman villa of considerable size has been discovered to the north-west of the Yarwell crossroads, with finds from the site including pottery, tile, plaster and a stone capital. Archaeological monitoring on land to the immediate west of the proposed development area in 2003 recorded no significant archaeological activity. However, as the groundworks in this area did not penetrate the topsoil, the presence of archaeological remains in this area could not be ascertained.

This project follows on from an archaeological evaluation already carried out on the site. Three trenches were excavated, encountering a substantial, but undated, ditch in Trench 3; the other two trenches showed disturbance from previous construction.

The mitigation encountered the archaeological remains identified in the evaluation, with no further features being identified. All features were sealed below a layer that appeared to be made ground.

The linear ditch contained animal bone and an iron artefact, as well as a tiny sherd of late Iron Age or Early Roman pottery. It is unclear what this feature would have been used for.

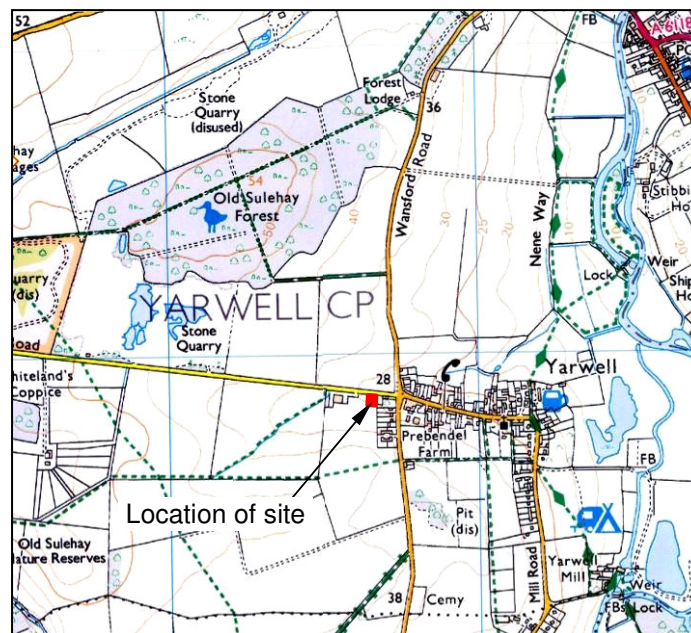


Figure 1: Site location plan at scale 1:25,000. The site is marked in red. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS Licence No. 100049278.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by Wythe Holland Ltd. to carry out a programme of archaeological mitigation on land adjacent to no.9, Sulehay Road, Yarwell, Northamptonshire.

2.0 Location and description (figs. 1 and 2)

The village of Yarwell lies within the district of East Northamptonshire: it lies directly to the south of the Northamptonshire-Cambridgeshire boarder, approximately 1 mile to the south of Wansford in Cambridgeshire. It falls into the Historic Landscape Character Area 4f, 'Nene Valley: Yarwell to Wood Newton'. Yarwell is the only settlement within this Character Area, and is centred on a single street running off Wansford Road towards the River Nene. Apart from some ribbon development to the south, it has not expanded much since the early 19th century (NCC, n.d.)

The development site lies on the western edge of Yarwell, on the south side of Sulehay Road, a short distance to the west from its junction with Wansford Road. The site is roughly rectangular, bordered by Sulehay Road to the north, a residential property to the east, and pen farmland to the west and south. It was formerly occupied by one building, now demolished, on the west side: this was a garage and incorporated an inspection pit from vehicle maintenance.

The central National Grid Reference of the site is TL 06651 97858

3.0 Topography and Geology

The Yarwell to Wood Newton Landscape Character Area is located on the Nene Valley side, overlooking the River Nene to the east. The ground slopes gently down towards the river (NCC, n.d.). The site itself slopes gently from north to south, with approximate Ordnance Datum heights of 30.2m above sea level at its northern edge and 29.6m adjacent to the road.

The local geology consists of Lower Lincolnshire Limestone Formation with outcrops of Blisworth Clay Formation (Great Oolite) clay (*ibid*). Stone quarrying is widespread to the west of Yarwell.

4.0 Planning Background

Full planning permission for the construction of two houses was granted by East Northamptonshire District Council in August 2014 (planning application number 14/00916/FUL).

This permission was granted subject to the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation submitted to and agreed in writing by the Planning Authority (condition 4). This programme commenced with an archaeological evaluation: in the light of the findings of the evaluation, a programme of archaeological mitigation during construction groundworks was recommended.

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

A Roman villa on the north-west side of the Yarwell crossroads, approximately 40m to the north-east of the present development site, was partially excavated in 1953 by the pupils of Oundle School. The building proved to be of considerable size with a number of interior divisions; remains lay only 0.2m below existing ground level. Finds from the site included pottery, tiles, plaster and a stone capital; no tessellated or tiled floors were discovered. Few details are known as the site was never published (EH PastScape ref. 361340).

Yarwell was a manorial settlement in the Middle Ages, post-dating the Norman Conquest; there is no Domesday Book entry for a settlement of this name. The manor house had disappeared by the end of the 16th century (ENDC, 1996).

Yarwell parish was enclosed in 1777; the landscape displays the typical pattern of Parliamentary enclosure, crossed by straight roads, laid out by the Enclosure Commissioners, and with the majority of field boundaries also being straight (NCC, n.d.).

Archaeological monitoring of development groundworks on land adjoining no.9, Sulehay Road by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust in 2003 recorded no significant archaeological activity (NMR ref. 1441063). These works took place to the immediate west of the present application site, but as groundworks did not penetrate the topsoil the presence or absence of archaeological remains could not be ascertained (Savage 2014).

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by PCAS as the initial stage of this project. Three 10m x 2m trenches were excavated, laid out in order to sample the area affected by the development, avoiding the footprint of a former garage known to have stood on the western side of the site until recently (Fig 3). Trenches 1 and 2, on the east side proved to have been heavily disturbed by another building, not shown on either current or historic mapping; Trench 3 contained a substantial, but undated, north to south-aligned ditch (Markus, 2014).

6.0 Methodology

The scheme of archaeological mitigation took place during the beginning stages of the construction groundworks, and consisted of the machine stripping of topsoil and subsoil in the south-western corner of site, over the western house plot, where archaeological remains were identified during the evaluation. These works were undertaken by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket under the supervision of a PCAS Project Officer.

Features exposed were planned at a scale of 1:50 on a base plan. All excavated features were drawn in section at a scale of 1:20. The section drawings were located on the base plans; Ordnance Datum levels were taken using a Global Positioning System. Deposits were recorded on standard PCAS record sheets, and an excavation site diary was also kept; a digital photographic record, supplemented by colour slide photography, was made, and extracts from this are reproduced in Appendix 1. Finds were stored in labelled finds bags prior to their removal to the offices of PCAS for initial processing.

Following the completion of the fieldwork, the finds were taken to PCAS to be washed, marked and sorted. The finds were dispatched to specialists for assessment, and the specialists' findings are included in full in the appendices.

The fieldwork was carried out by Richard Mandeville, and took place between the 11th and 12th of September 2014. Weather conditions were generally overcast.

7.0 Results

The excavation area was on the west side of the site, over the identified archaeological remains from the evaluation, and was aligned approximately north-south (fig. 4).

The area was excavated to natural (100), which consisted of mid yellow-brown silty clay with large amounts of plated limestone. This was overlain by layer (101) of mid grey-brown silty clay 0.08m deep.

A single feature was encountered cut into natural substrate (100): a wide, shallow ditch [102], previously identified by evaluation, 3.6m wide and 0.33m deep, aligned NNW-SSE (Fig 5; plate 3). This had a primary fill (103) of mid grey-brown sandy clay with 30-40% sub-rounded gravels and plated limestone, 1.4m wide and 0.12m deep, overlain by fill (104) of mid grey-brown silty clay with 30-40% plated limestone, 3.22m wide and 0.33m deep. The later fill contained fragments of animal bone, an iron artefact, possibly a bent nail or brooch fragment, and a tiny sherd of Late Iron Age / Early Roman pottery.

As well as this, foundations for the former garage and its inspection pit were also detected.

No further archaeological finds or features were detected.

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The finds from the linear feature are somewhat limited by their size and frequency, but those which are datable are of late Iron Age / Early Roman date. It is likely this feature relates in some way to the Roman Villa located north-east of the development site, possibly being part of the land management system of the time. Unfortunately, our interpretation of this feature is limited by the level of disturbance in the study area.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

Archaeological mitigation was effective in dating the archaeological remains identified on the site during the evaluation phase. However, our understanding of these remains is still limited.

10.0 Project Archive

The project archive, consisting of the site recording and the finds, is under preparation at the PCAS offices in Saxilby. At present, there is no receiving museum for archaeological archives generated in Northamptonshire; an accession number ENN 107681 has been allocated to this project, and the archive will be deposited with a printed copy of this report when a venue is determined. A copy of the full report will also be uploaded to the Archaeology Data Service OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS) database, where it will be publicly accessible online through the ADS website, PCAS report no 1309.

11.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services would like to thank Wythe Holland Ltd. for this commission.

12.0 References

East Northamptonshire District Council (ENDC), 1996, *Yarwell Strategy Statement*.

Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), n.d., *Historic Landscape Character Assessment*.

Markus, S., 2014, *Land adjacent to no. 9, Sulehay Road, Yarwell, Northamptonshire: Archaeological evaluation report*. PCAS

Savage, R. D., 2014, *Land adjacent to no.9, Sulehay Road, Yarwell, Northamptonshire: Specification for a programme of archaeological mitigation*. PCAS

Planning documents viewed online at:

<http://pawebssrv.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/onlineapplications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=N5K282GO03N00>

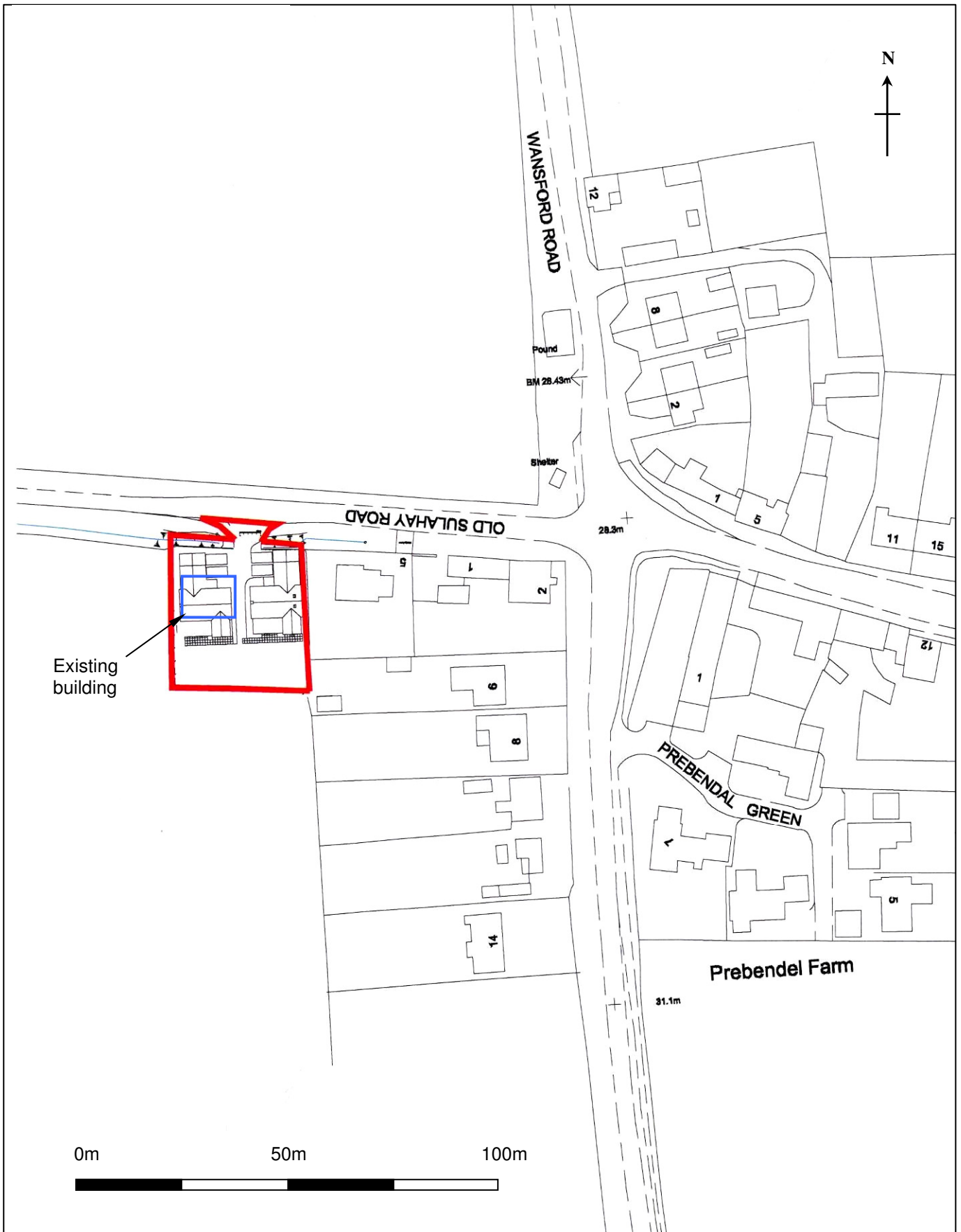


Figure 2: Location plan of the site (marked in red) at scale 1:1250, showing the existing building (blue) superimposed on the proposed development. Plan supplied by client.



Figure 3: As-proposed plan of the site at scale 1:200, with excavation area location shown in red. Plan supplied by client.

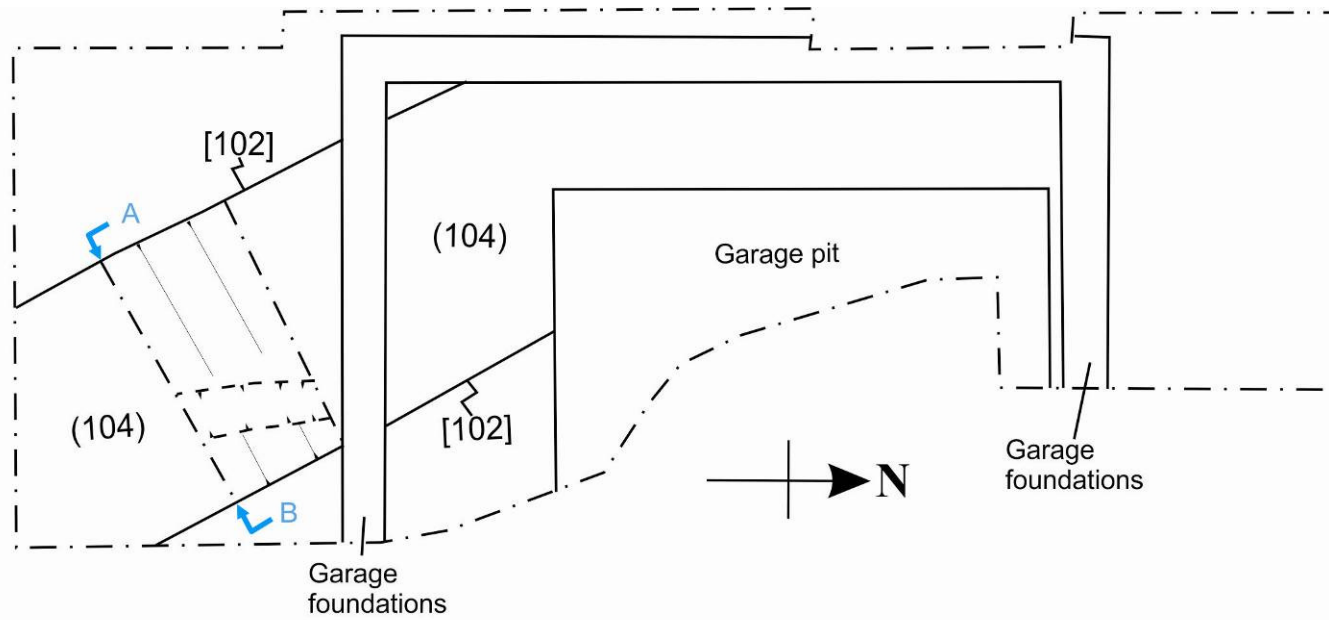


Figure 4: Plan of excavation area at scale 1:100

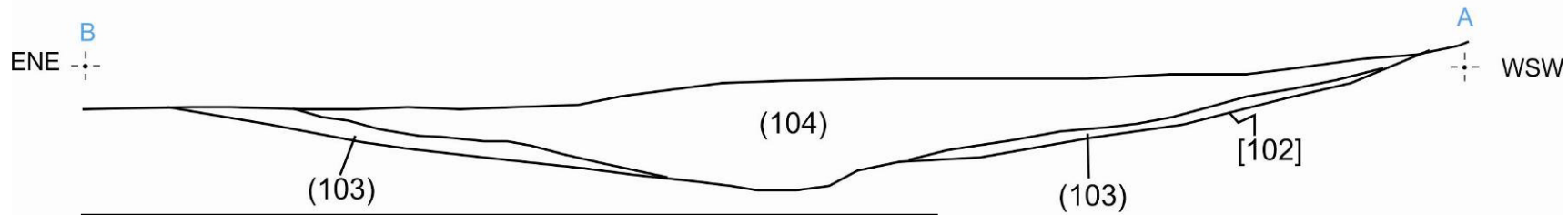
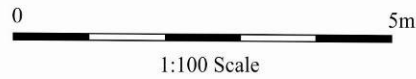
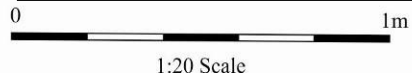


Figure 5: South-south-east facing section of ditch [102] at scale 1:20



Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General view of site on arrival (looking SW)



Plate 2: General view of site post-excavation (looking NNW)



Plate 3: Section of ditch [102] (looking SSE)

Appendix 2: Context Summary

Context no.	Type	Description	Finds/dating
Area 1			
100	Layer	Natural substrate. Yellow-brown silty clay with plated limestone – limestone brash	Geological
101	Layer	Mid grey brown clayey silt, 0.08m deep	Modern
102	Cut	Linear shallow ditch with irregular base, aligned NNW – SSE, 0.33m deep, 3.6m wide.	Undated
103	Fill	Lower fill of feature 102: Mid grey-brown sandy clay with 30-40% sub-rounded gravels and plated limestone (5mm-40mm), 0.12m deep, 1.4m wide	Undated
104	Fill	Upper fill of feature 102: Mid-dark grey-brown silty clay with 30-40% plated limestone (5mm-120mm), 0.33m deep, 3.22m wide	Animal bone, Fe brooch, undated

Appendix 3: The Iron Age or Roman pottery

I.M. Rowlandson
November 23rd 2014

The pottery has been archived using count and weight as measures according to the guidelines laid down for the minimum archive by *The Study Group for Roman Pottery* (Darling 2004) and concorded with the Northamptonshire Roman pottery fabrics scheme (Aird and MacRobert nd). Additional codes have been introduced following City of Lincoln Archaeological Unit form codes when suitable codes were not evident (Darling and Precious 2014). The archive record (see below) provides a full record of the pottery and will be curated in an Access database, available from the author in a digital format.

A single scrap of shell-gritted pottery (2g), retrieved from fill (104) of ditch [102], could be dated to the late Iron Age or early Roman period. It is not certain if the sherd was handmade or wheelmade.

This pottery should be deposited with the relevant local museum.

SURM14- Sherd data										
Context	Fabric	Form	Decoration	Vessels	Alt	D. no	Comments	Join	Sherd	Weight (g)
104	IASH	-		1			BS; FRAGMENT; ONLY ONE SURFACE SURVIVES; COMMON MEDIUM SHELL; ?IRON AGE OR EARLY ROMAN; NORTHANTS FABRIC GROUP B		1	2

REFERENCES

Aird, P., and MacRobert, E., nd, The Roman pottery from Ashton, Northants, unpublished typescript

Darling, M.J., 2004, Guidelines for the archiving of Roman Pottery. *Journal of Roman Pottery Studies* 11, 67-74.

Darling, M.J. and Precious, B.J., 2014, *Corpus of Roman Pottery from Lincoln*, Lincoln Archaeological Studies No. 6, Oxbow Books, Oxford

Appendix 4: The Animal Bone

Jennifer Wood

Introduction

A total of 6 (42g) refitted fragments of animal bone were recovered by hand during archaeological works undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Services Ltd at land adjacent to no. 9, Sulehay Road, Yarwell, East Northamptonshire. The remains were recovered from a single ditch [102].

Results

The remains were generally of a good overall condition, averaging at grade 2 on the Lyman criteria (1996).

No evidence of burning, butchery, working or gnawing was noted on the remains.

Table 1: Summary of Identified Bone

Context	Cut	Taxon	Element	Side	Number	Weight	Comments
104	102	Equid	Phalanx I	R	1	22	Lateral distal articulation and shaft. 3 fragments
		Large Mammal Size	Long Bone	X	4	15	Shaft fragments
		Large Mammal Size	Vertebra	X	1	5	Neural arch fragment

As can be seen, *equid* was the only species identified within the assemblage. The remaining assemblage was unidentifiable beyond size category.

The assemblage is too small to provide meaningful information on animal husbandry and utilisation on site, save the presence/use of the animals on site.

References

Lyman, R L, 1996 *Vertebrate Taphonomy*, Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Appendix 5: The Other Find

Gary Taylor

Introduction

A single other find weighing 18g was recovered.

Condition

The other find is in moderate condition but very corroded and encrusted.

Results

Table 1: Other Materials

Cxt	Cut	Material	Description	NoF	W (g)	Date
104	102	iron	uncertain, probable bent nail	1	18	

Provenance

The other find was recovered from the fill (104) of a ditch [102].

Range

A single iron item was found. It is very corroded and encrusted and of uncertain identification. It is probably a nail that has been bent, as generally occurs when they are drawn out of timber. The twisting of the item gives it some similarity to various types of short-bowed Roman brooches (eg, Stead 1986, no 45). However, while Roman iron brooches exist they are scarce and usually have fairly simple bows with limited twisting, though an iron Alesia brooch with a prominent bend from the bow to the catch-plate is known from Peterborough (Hattatt 1989, 48-9).

Potential

As an object of uncertain identification the object is of limited potential.

ABBREVIATIONS

CXT	Context
NoF	Number of Fragments
W (g)	Weight (grams)

REFERENCES

Hattatt, R, 1989 *Ancient Brooches and Other Artefacts* (Oxford)

Stead, I.M., 1986 'The brooches', I.M. Stead and V. Rigby, *Baldock The Excavation of a Roman and Pre-Roman Settlement, 1968-72*, Britannia Monograph Series 7, 109-125